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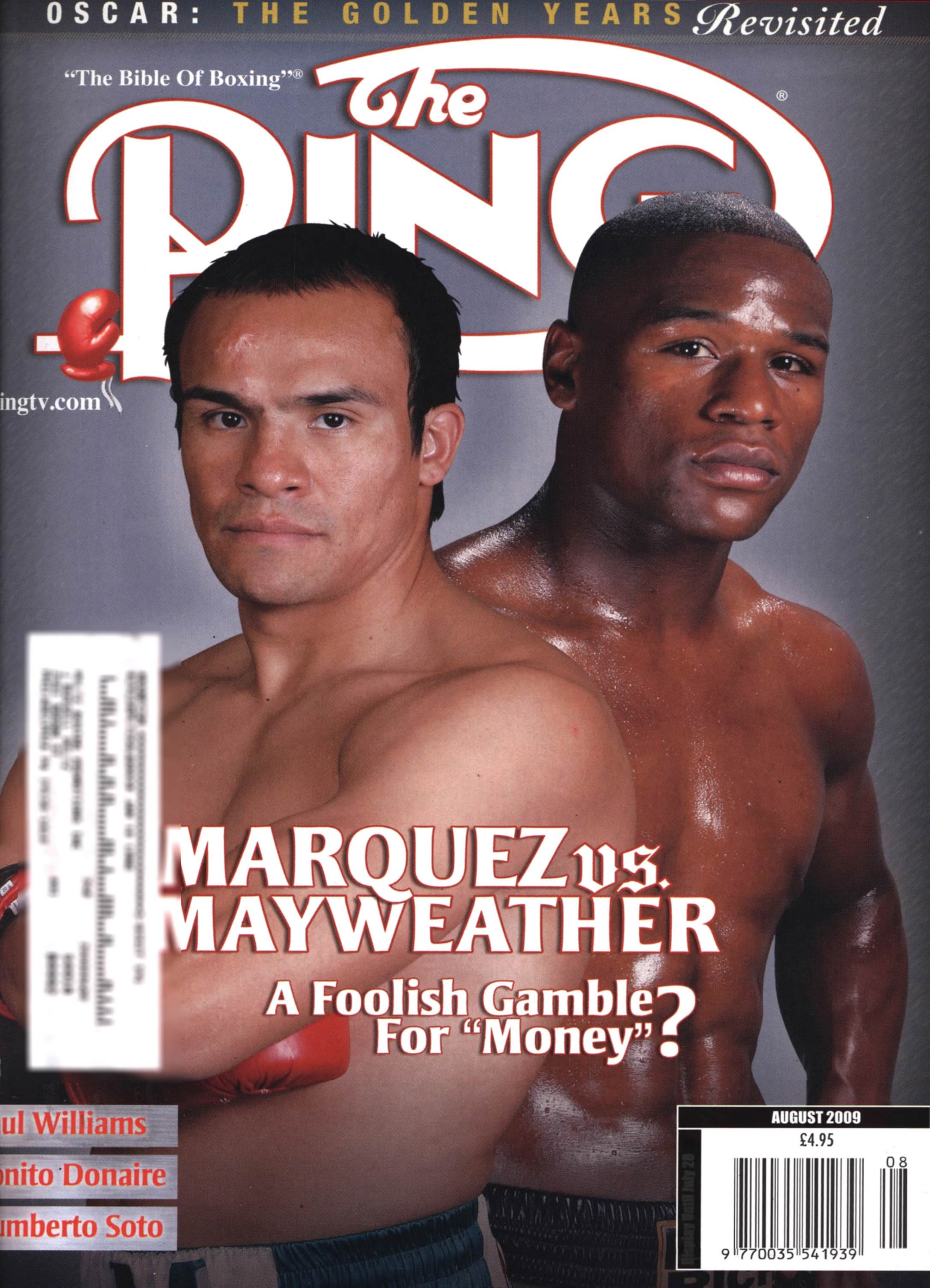

MARQUEZ vs. MAYWEATHER

A Foolish Gamble For "Money"?

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umberto Soto

AUGUST 2009

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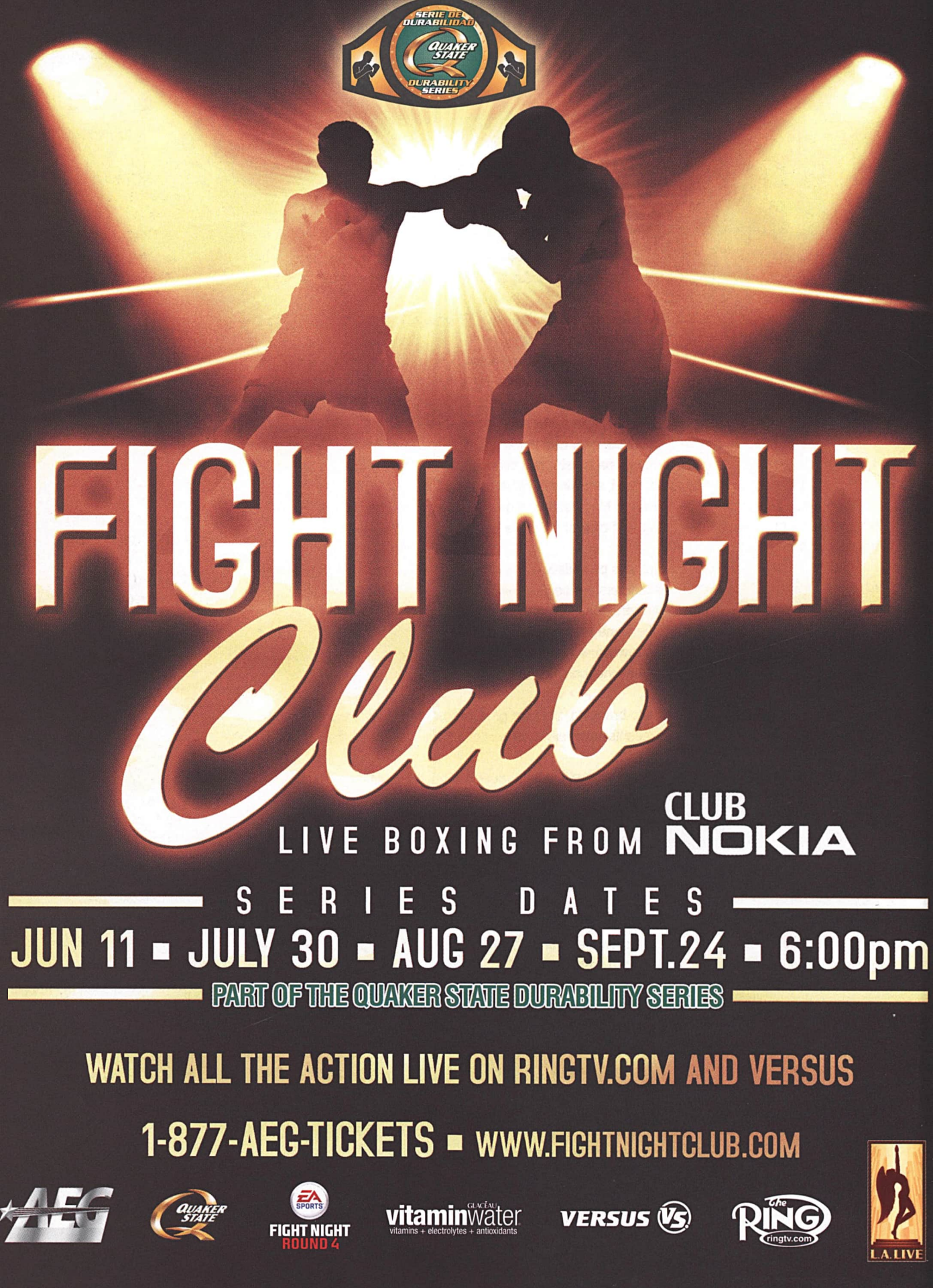
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Volume 88, No. 9 August 2009

The RING

The Return Of The Prodigal Son

Love him or hate him, boxing is lucky to have its number-one villain back in action. Every melodrama needs a bad guy, but the vast majority of today's finest fighters are sweethearts. Just look at THE RING's current pound-for-pound ratings:

Manny Pacquiao, Juan Manuel Marquez, Shane Mosley, Israel Vazquez, Rafael Marquez, Miguel Cotto, Nonito Donaire—you couldn't find a nicer bunch of guys.

The only exceptions on the list are Bernard Hopkins, who maintains an edge even at this avuncular stage of his career, and Vic Darchinyan. Vic has all the qualities of a top-of-the-line villain, including the punch to back up his psycho-killer persona. But, alas, Vic is a 115-pound Australian of Armenian heritage who looks like he's just escaped from a padded room. Not exactly crossover material.

Floyd "Money" Mayweather, however, is perfectly cast in the role, the ideal villain for today's market—as gifted as he is exasperating, as pretty as he is vain, and blessed with a mouth almost as big as his talent. He is, in turn, petulant, charming, cruel, and kind. A fighter of both flash and substance.

While a growing minority are drawn to Mayweather's qualities, a substantially larger number are repulsed by his arrogant posturing and clamor for Little Floyd's head, preferably at the feet of Manny Pacquiao.

The reason that Mayweather-Pacquiao is potentially a box-office bonanza is not just because they are fantastic fighters. It is their contrasting personalities that would make it a gigantic event, albeit one that might never happen now that Mayweather has signed to fight Juan Manuel Marquez.

Mayweather-Marquez isn't in quite the same league as Pacquiao-Mayweather, but it's another Good Guy vs. Bad Guy showdown, thanks to Mayweather. And if Marquez happens to win, a third fight between he and Pac-Man might not need a villain in either corner.

◆◆◆

I'm no Mayweather when he comes to bragging, but take great pleasure, nonetheless, in bringing attention to this year's Barney Awards, presented annually to the winners of the Boxing Writers Association of America's writing contest.

All told, this year THE RING garnered eight Barneys, our best showing since the inception of the awards, which are named for the late former president of the BWAA, Barney Nagler.

Prolific contributor Don Stradley was the big winner, taking first place in the feature (under 2,500 words) category for "The Nonpareil" and second place in event coverage for "The Last Of The Titans."

RING rookie Michael Rivest also took home a first place in the feature (over 2,500 words) category for "The Color Of Boxing." Quite a feat considering that he had only published one previous article in THE RING.

Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito earned second place in the feature (under 2,500 words) category for his profile of Danny Garcia and received an honorable mention in feature (over 2,500 words) category for his coverage of the second Pacquiao-Marquez fight.

Contributing Editor Eric Raskin's "Klitschko vs. Klitschko" took an honorable mention for a feature (under 2,500 words) category, Senior Writer William Dettloff's insightful look the Hopkins-Kelly Pavlik fight tied for third place in event coverage, and former Associated Editor Robert Cassidy snagged an honorable mention in the investigative reporting category for his look at boxing in Cuba today.

Even the newest member of THE RING family, RingTV.com, did well, with freelancer Norm Fraunheim taking an honorable mention in investigative reporting for his piece about how trouble along the U.S.-Mexico border is affecting boxing. Finally, yours truly chipped in with an honorable mention for "The History Of The Ring," the story that launched our revamped website in association with Yahoo!Sports.

For a complete list of this year's Barney Award winners go to: bwaa.org

Nigel Collins
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FOUNDER
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William Dettloff

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

CIRCULATION SERVICES
David Tyler

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Robert Gasparri
(213) 233-2952
sepub@sepublications.com

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
Sports and Entertainment
Publications, LLC
P.O. Box 529
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529
1-800-846-6438
custsrvcsep@sepublications.com

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[Opening Shot]

Sniffin' Leather

Jindrich Kubin's nose did spring back after taking this vicious right hand from James DeGale in Belfast, Northern Ireland, but maybe not quite all the way. Degale, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist from the United Kingdom, upped his record to 2-0 (1) after stopping Kubin in the first round.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

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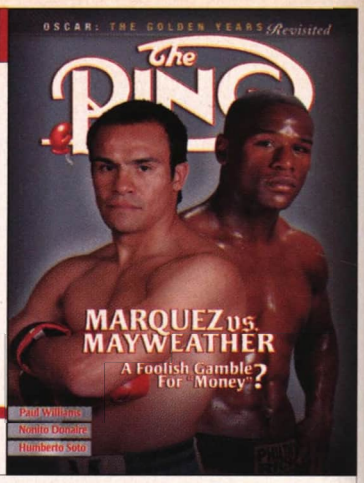

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Floyd Mayweather **by Al Bello/Getty Images**
Cover Design by **Olivia Sheehan**

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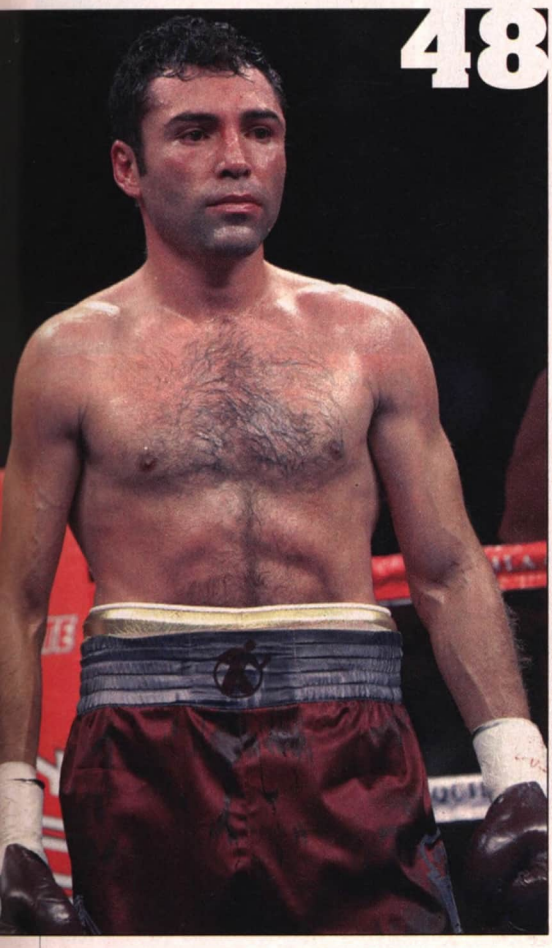

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

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Acting Like Fighters

In case you were wondering why Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale were hanging around the Wild Card Boxing Club in April, watching Manny Pacquiao train during HBO's *Pacquiao-Hatton 24/7*, the answer is that they were there on a work assignment. Wahlberg has been cast as Micky Ward and Bale as half-brother Dick Ecklund (replacing Matt Damon, who was originally penciled in for the role) for the upcoming movie *The Fighter*.

Good actors? Sure. Proven box-office attractions? Absolutely. But there's one little problem: They don't look much like the pugs they're playing.

Sure, with the right hair and makeup, anything's possible, but it mostly appears that the movie's producers are banking on mainstream audiences being unfamiliar with Ward and Ecklund and not caring that the actors look like the boxers they're playing.

But the fight fraternity knows what these guys look like and wouldn't mind a little authenticity. In that vein, here are our picks for the actors we'd like to see playing some modern fighters if they had their lives made into movies:

Oscar De La Hoya: Adrian Grenier. This is the part *Entourage's* Vinny Chase was born to play. Sure, he'd have to cut his trademark curly locks, but otherwise, he's a handsome, swarthy, smiley perfect fit.

Floyd Mayweather: Usher. We'd need to make sure the singer/actor can ride a Segway, but if so, he's got the part.

Bernard Hopkins: Samuel L. Jackson. Okay, it's a little bit more of a sound-alike than a look-alike, but the look isn't *too* far off.

Antonio Tarver: That guy who played Mason "The Line" Dixon in *Rocky Balboa*. He's a dead ringer.

Amir Khan: Dev Patel. Thanks to *Slumdog Millionaire*, we have some actors of Khan's approximate ethnicity to choose from now, and the main star of *Slumdog* just needs to bulk up and he'd be Khan's spitting image.

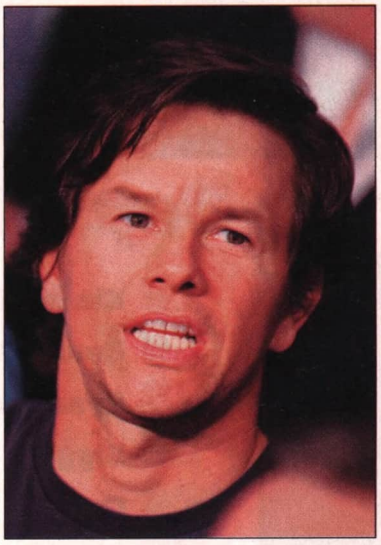
Wladimir Klitschko: Dolph Lundgren. Sure, it's kind of obvious to cast Ivan Drago, but Lundgren is 6'6" and he looks the part if you give him dark hair. Plus, it would give us a chance to see either Ben Vereen cast as Emanuel Steward.

Vic Darchinyan: Richard Moll. Granted, the guy who played Bull on *Night Court* is about 18 inches too tall for this part. But facially, he's perfect. We just need to surround him with 7'2" actors so he looks like a junior bantamweight, or have him play the part on his knees.

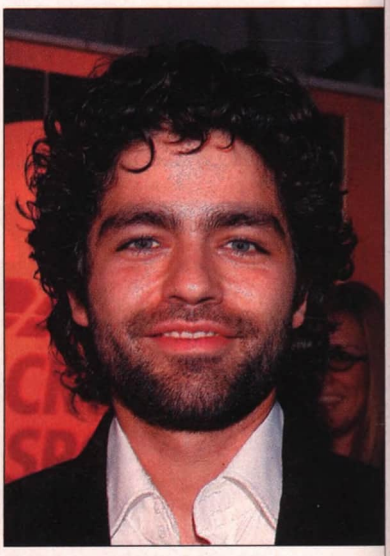
Steve Cunningham: Djimon Hounsou. Maybe you don't know the two-time Academy Award nominee by name, but if you saw him standing next to the former cruiserweight champ, you wouldn't know which guy is which.

Nicolay Valuev: The late John Matuszak. You know, the guy who played Sloth in *The Goonies*. (It's almost too easy making jokes at poor Valuev's expense.)

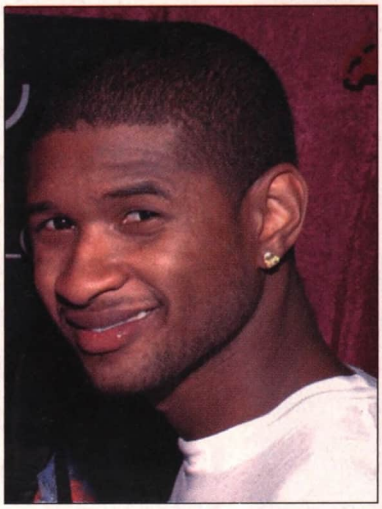
—Eric Raskin



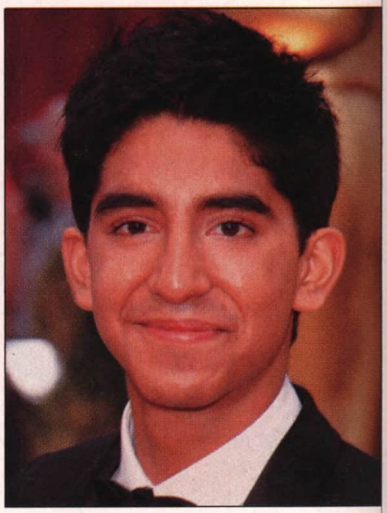
Mark: Playing Micky



Adrian: Perfect as Oscar



Usher: Fab as Floyd



Dev: Could be Khan

Tommy Gibbons vs. John Dillinger

One of the summer blockbuster movies is *Public Enemies*, starring heartthrob Johnny Depp as gangster John Dillinger, who, according to the FBI's website, in 1933-'34 "terrorized the Midwest, killing 10 men, wounding seven others, robbing banks and police arsenals, and staging three jail breaks—killing a sheriff during one and wounding two guards in another."

Like a lot of other Depression-era outlaws, Dillinger—the first federally stamped "Public Enemy Number One"—spent time holed-up in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Twin City was then "like a department store for gangsters," according to local resident Paul Maccabee, author of *John Dillinger Slept Here: A Crooks' Tour Of Crime And Corruption In St. Paul, 1920-1936*. "Whatever a bank robber or kidnapper needed, [he] could find it in St. Paul." In late-March of '34, Dillinger narrowly escaped capture while hiding out in an apartment there.

Fed up with the corruption and lawlessness in his hometown, and the public hero-worship in which Dillinger basked, later that spring a St. Paul insurance agent ran for Sheriff of Ramsay County, declaring:

"I'd like to get in a room with him and see how long he'd last without his machine gun. That guy's made monkeys out of officers long enough. I don't think he can take it, and if I get the sheriff's star maybe I'll get a crack at him."

It was brave talk, but Tommy Gibbons could back it up. He'd lasted 15 rounds against Jack Dempsey for the world heavyweight title in the famous "Battle of Shelby" (Montana) on July 4, 1923, losing the decision. Gibbons also fought Harry Greb (four times) and many other greats of his era, and in 106 recorded bouts was stopped only in the last one, by Gene Tunney.

Gibbons: Retires as Ramsay County sheriff in 1958

Gibbons' bold challenge was answered about the time the ex-fighter won the primary election on June 20. The United Press reported that a postcard was sent to Gibbons from Milwaukee. "Having read in one of the local papers that you want to meet me," it said, "I will see that you shall have that chance in the near future, as I am coming to your home city." It was signed "John Dillinger."

But what would have been another Battle of the Century never came to pass. On July 22, 1934, FBI agents killed Dillinger in Chicago.

Gibbons was elected and served as Ramsay County Sheriff for 24 year, retiring a year before his death in 1960. He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1993. His life would make a hell of a movie.

—Pete Ehrmann

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
04/17/09	Selcuk Aydin W 12 Said Ouali *Cocky young Turk stalks with Darchinyan intensity*	Showtime	w	C	C+	C+
04/17/09	Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 10 Jose Rojas *Gamboa gets real sloppy when trying to finish a hurt foe*	Showtime	f	B	B	B-
04/18/09	Brian Viloria KO 11 Ulises Solis *Every time we're ready to write Viloria off he impresses!*	PPV	fl	A-	A-	A-
04/18/09	Nonito Donaire KO 4 Raul Martinez *It's a shame a Darchinyan rematch seems out of reach*	PPV	jfl	A	B+	B
04/24/09	Daniel Jacobs KO 2 Jose Varela *One-punch kayo lands as Teddy Atlas announces Jacobs lacks power*	ESPN2	m	C+	C+	C+
04/24/09	Antonio Escalante KO 3 Gary Stark *The stark reality is Escalante remains the only prospect after this fight*	ESPN2	jf	C+	C+	B-
04/24/09	Devon Alexander KO 9 Jesus Rodriguez *Let's not hand over the nickname Alexander "The Great" just yet*	Showtime	jw	B-	C+	C
04/24/09	Cory Spinks W 12 Deandre Latimore *Both emerge better in the public's eye after competitive scrap*	Showtime	jm	B	B	B-
04/25/09	Lamont Peterson KO 7 Willy Blain *Thumbs down to this fight and whoever decided to broadcast it on HBO*	HBO	jw	C+	C-	C-
04/25/09	Juan Manuel Lopez KO 9 Gerry Penalosa *Penalosa's heart was as impressive as Lopez' skills*	HBO	jf	B+	B-	C+
04/25/09	Allan Green KO 2 Carlos De Leon Jr. *Green made De Leon wish his dad was a salesman instead of a boxer*	Showtime	sm	C+	C	C+
04/25/09	Carl Froch KO 12 Jermain Taylor *Another opponent gets off the canvas to kayo Taylor*	Showtime	sm	A-	A	A
05/01/09	Alfonso Gomez KO 8 Juan Buendia *Vampires' delight!*	TV Azteca	w	B-	B	B+
05/01/09	Urbano Antillon KO 5 Tyrone Harris *Antillon hurt Harris with bodyshots in every round*	TV Azteca	l	B	C+	C+
05/01/09	Luis Abregu KO 4 Irving Garcia *Multi-knockdown fight had more momentum changes than a great jazz album*	Showtime	w	B	C+	A
05/02/09	Daniel Jacobs W 8 Michael Walker *Jacobs wins second televised fight in eight days*	PPV	m	C+	B-	C
05/02/09	Humberto Soto KO 9 Benoit Gaudet *Gaudet did not have the legs to protect his chin from Soto's power*	PPV	jl	B+	C+	B-
05/02/09	**Manny Pacquiao KO 2 Ricky Hatton** ***Has Hatton been scraped off the canvas yet?***	**PPV**	**jw**	**A+**	**A+**	**A**
05/08/09	Craig McEwan W 10 Brian Vera *No great Scot here*	ESPN2	m	C+	B-	C+
05/09/09	Chad Dawson W 12 Antonio Tarver *This is why mandatory rematches should be outlawed*	HBO	lh	B+	C+	C
05/15/09	Jorge Teron W 10 Aldo Valtierra *It's not a good sign when a prospect is busy avenging losses*	ESPN2	l	C+	C+	C
05/15/09	Kevin Johnson KO 6 Devin Vargas *If only Johnson's punch were as big as his mouth*	ESPN2	h	B	B-	B
05/16/09	Miguel Garcia KO 3 Anthony Napunyi *Napunyi is still in search of a win outside of Kenya*	TV Azteca	f	C	C	C+
05/16/09	Brandon Rios KO 5 Oscar Meza *Meza still in search of a win outside of Mexico*	TV Azteca	l	B-	C	B
05/16/09	John Molina KO 2 Frankie Archuleta *This looked like a rematch between Arturo Gatti and Joey Gamache*	Showtime	l	C+	C-	C-
05/16/09	Andre Ward W 12 Edison Miranda *Ward eased off just when he should have stepped on the gas*	Showtime	sm	B	B	C+

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Boxing Bookshelf

In the long history of heavyweight boxing, was there ever a more vulnerable champion than Floyd Patterson—on either side of the ropes? In the ring it was Patterson's suspect chin that made you hold your breath every time an opponent tagged him. During his two championship reigns (1956-'59, 1960-'62), Patterson was knocked down by Pete Radamacher, Roy Harris, Tom McNeeley, Ingemar Johannson, and Sonny Liston.

But he bruised just as easily reading the newspaper or doing an interview. "My feelings are rather delicate," Patterson once confessed. "You can say something and hurt me very much." His hyper-sensitivity and intense introspection, by-products of his lonely, isolated, and impoverished childhood, prompted critics to call him "Freud" Patterson.

Reading in the introduction to *Floyd Patterson: A Boxer And A Gentleman* (McFarland & Company, 297 pages, paperback, $35) that Patterson "appeared to embody all the noble human traits commonly drawn from the Bible or from the Boy Scout Manual" (which would certainly set him apart as well from most of his championship brethren), one prepares himself with a sigh and gritted teeth for a strictly and relentlessly rose-colored look at this talented but very complex fighter and human being.

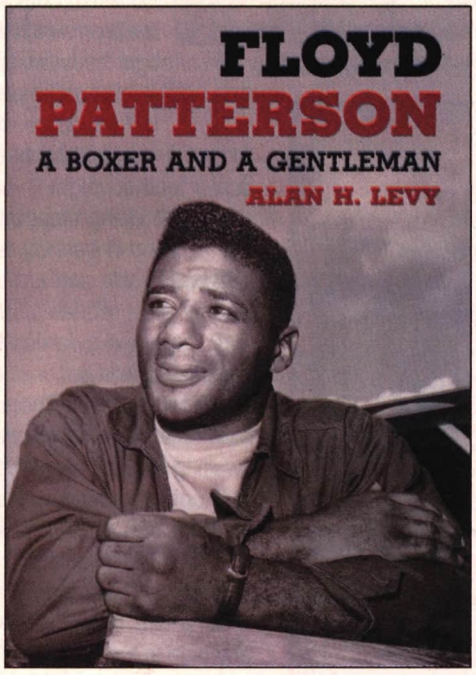
So it's a pleasant surprise to find out that for the most part author Alan H. Levy has confected a balanced and workmanlike portrait that also acknowledges the problems brought on by Floyd's tender psyche. "Until Patterson, the heavyweights had never seen such a one-two combination of frustrated, lonely humility and paranoia-driven management at the top of its division," he writes, referring in the latter case to Cus D'Amato, the Machiavellian manager who steered Patterson clear of the top contenders once they had the title.

Patterson was a quiet civil rights activist who marched with Martin Luther King in Mississippi, but when the sportswriters fell in love with the radical chic Ali, "Patterson and the mainstream politics he represented just did not look cool," writes Levy.

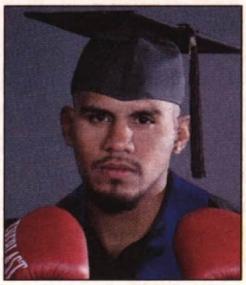
Floyd lost his title fight with Ali (who called him the most skillful boxer he ever faced) in 1965, and soldiered on in the ring for another seven years. By then, notes Levy, the neuroses and complexities that had for years intrigued sportswriters became "like discussions of the eccentricities of a family's oldest dog." *Ouch!*

Pierce Egan, he ain't. Levy calls Jim Norris of the International Boxing Club "Frank," British heavyweight Joe Erskine "John," puts the 1912 Jack Johnson-Jim Flynn heavyweight title fight in the wrong Las Vegas (it was the one in New Mexico, not Nevada), and even manages to misspell the surname of Willie Pep ("Pepp"). 1960s light heavyweight champion and Hall of Famer Harold Johnson is appallingly described as "a lowly 32-year-old Philadelphia journeyman." Levy also wants headgear to be mandatory in professional boxing, to prevent the *pugilistica dementia* that befell Patterson before his death in 2006.

—Pete Ehrmann

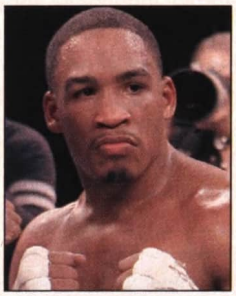


Outside the Ropes



Diaz: Graduates

Lightweight contender **Juan "Baby Bull" Diaz** received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Houston on May 17 … The post office in Brockton, Massachusetts, has been renamed in the honor of former heavyweight champion **Rocky Marciano**, a favorite son of the city. "This is such a great honor for Rocky, myself, my family, and the city of Brockton," said the ex-champ's son, Rocky Jr. … **Hud Mellencamp**, the 14-year-old son of rock singer **John Mellencamp**, won a divisional title at the Indiana Golden Gloves … **Golden Boy Promotions** launched a series of monthly boxing cards to be televised on Versus and streamed live on ringTV.com. The fights will be held at the Club Nokia in downtown Los Angeles … A company owned by promoter **Frank Warren** has been ordered by Caernarfon Crown Court to pay Millennium Stadium nearly £150,000 (approximately $238,00) for the costs of staging the Joe **Calzaghe**-**Mikkel Kessler** fight in November 2007 … Junior welterweight contender **Kendall Holt**, 27, pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering stemming from a series of drug transactions made by his manger **Henry Cortes**. Holt accepted a plea bargain in New Jersey Superior Court that will allow him to apply for entry into a pre-trial intervention program, which will allow the boxer to avoid a prison sentence. According to NorthJersey.com, Holt told Judge **Donald J. Volkert** that on several occasions he picked up bags of money and delivered them to Cortes, and that he knew the money was the proceeds from drug deals. But Holt insisted that he never used or dealt drugs. Chief Assistant Prosecutor **Jay McCann** said that Holt cooperated fully with the investigation and is a good candidate for pre-trial intervention. Cortes pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute drugs and was awaiting sentencing at press time … Undefeated junior middleweight **James Kirkland**, 25-0 (22), was arrested on April 19 in Austin, Texas, on a weapons violation and incarcerated. Federal court documents indicate that Kirkland, 25, was found with a loaded .40-caliber Glock pistol in the consol of his vehicle. The fighter had been on probation for armed robbery that was committed in 2003, and was charged with possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon … South African trainer **Gert Stydom** was stabbed 13 times when he confronted robbers at his home. He was taken to the Flora Clinic near Roodepoort, where he was listed in serious condition. Stydom had recently trained **Malcolm Klassen** for his April 18, 2009, victory over **Cassius Baloyi** in which Klassen won the IBF super featherweight title via seventh-round TKO … Former Canadian light heavyweight titleholder **Al Sparks**, 75, died in late-September '08 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Sparks, who held his country's 175-pound title from 1968 until 1973, is enshrined in the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame, the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, and the Manitoba Hall of Fame. Sparks, 32-16 (6), worked for the Canadian National Railway Company throughout his boxing career … **Roy Jones**' attorney, **Stanley Levin**, 70, died in mid-April. He and his brother, **Fred Levin**, were chosen as co-managers of the year by the Boxing Writers Association of America in 1995 and was instrumental in the formation of Square Ring, Jones' promotional company … In mid-April Japanese flyweight **Noriyuki Komatsu**, 29, was killed when he slipped down a steep cliff and fell into the basin of a waterfall and drowned. Standing under a waterfall is an ancient tradition practiced by Japanese warriors who believe they become mentally and spiritually stronger by enduring the pressure and coldness of a waterfall. Komatsu, 24-6-6 (10), was attempting to follow this tradition when the accident occurred … Hungarian light heavyweight **Andras Nagy**, 23, died on May 7 as the result of a brain injury suffered while training in Melbourne, Australia. Nagy, 3-0 (3), was injured when he accidentally butted heads with a sparing partner … Junior featherweight **Benjamin Flores**, 25, died on May 5, five days after being stopped by **Bob Lenhardt**, 28-4 (22), in the eighth round of a scheduled 12-round bout for the vacant NABF 122-pound title at the Hilton Anatole hotel in Dallas, Texas. Shortly after referee **Laurence Cole** stopped the fight at the 2:10 mark and awarded Lenhardt a TKO victory, Flores, 19-4 (6), lapsed into unconsciousness and was removed from the ring on a stretcher. The stricken fighter was taken to Parkland Memorial Hospital where surgery was performed to relieve swelling of his brain. An autopsy showed that Flores had died of "blunt force head injuries." Veteran matchmaker **Bill Benton**, 62, told **John Whisler** of *The Dallas Morning News* that he was so upset that, "I don't think I could ever send two guys into the ring again. There comes a time, if you're not feeling right about what you're doing, you've got to stop. I'll probably never do anything in boxing again."



Kirkland: Busted

Quotable

"My dad's been working with me every day since the Hatton fight. We chill out, shoot pool, talk about different fighters."

—Floyd Mayweather Jr., speaking about his reconciliation with his father, Floyd Sr.

"She wowed everyone with her special dance number, which belied her true age as she moved gracefully on the dance floor of the Phela Grande Convention Center. The music switched from swing to waltz, tango to cha-cha and she never missed a step, showing off what she learned from her dance instructors."

—Aquiles Zonio, reporting on Dionisia Pacquiao (Manny's mother) 60th birthday party in the ***Philippine Daily Inquirer***

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended May 26, 2009

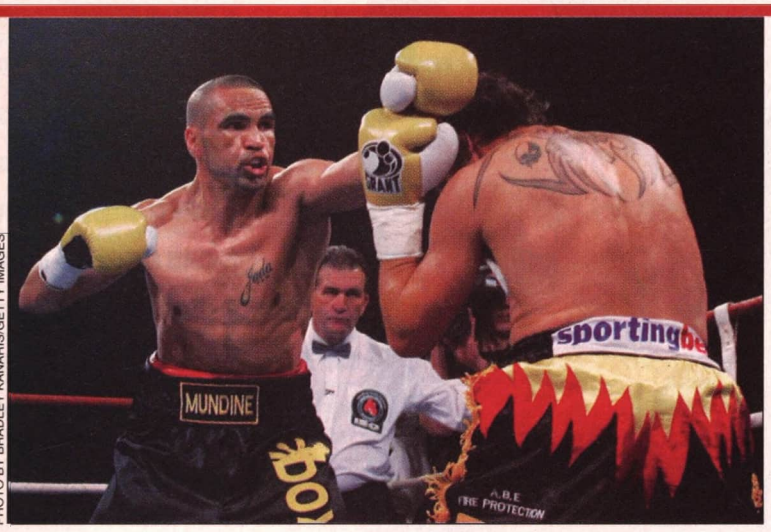


PHOTO BY BRADLEY KANARIS/GETTY IMAGES

Anthony Mundine enters the middleweight ratings after beating Daniel Geale

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: Giacobbe Fragomeni made a big move, jumping from seven to four after fighting a draw with number two Krzysztof Wlodarczyk. The move reshuffles the division, dropping Firat Arslan (fourth last issue) to six, and Vadim Tokarev from six to seven.
Light Heavyweights: No changes.
Super Middleweights: With Anthony Mundine (fifth last issue) leaving to campaign at middleweight, everyone rated six through nine moves up one spot each, making room for Andre Ward to re-enter the ratings at nine. Ward leaps over 10th-rated Denis Inkin based on his signature victory over Edison Miranda.
Middleweights: Mundine debuts at middleweight, entering at 10 after beating Daniel Geale (10th last issue), who exits.
Junior Middleweights: No changes. James Kirkland (ninth last issue) will remain in the ratings until a definitive answer comes from authorities in regards to his probation violation charge.
Welterweights: No changes.
Junior Welterweights: No changes.
Lightweights: No changes.
Junior Lightweights: Urbano Antillon (seventh last issue) comes departs to fight at lightweight, moving Jorge Linares from eight to seven, Nicky Cook from nine to eight, and Robert Guerrero from 10 to nine. Sergey Gulyakevich debuts at 10.
Featherweights: No changes.
Junior Featherweights: Toshiaki Nishioka re-enters the after needing just three rounds to stop Jhonny Gonzalez (eighth last issue), who drops to 10. Ricardo Cordoba (10th last issue) moves up to nine and Rendall Munroe (ninth last issue) exit.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: No changes.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: No changes.
Strawweights: No changes.
Pound-for-pound: No changes.

The RING
"The Bible Of Boxing"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Welterweight
2. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
3. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **Shane Mosley**
   Welterweight
5. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
7. **Miguel Cotto**
   Welterweight
8. **Nonito Donaire**
   Flyweight
9. **Vic Darchinyan**
   Junior Bantamweight
10. **Celestino Caballero**
    Junior Featherweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended May 26, 2009

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

PHOTO BY EDGAR QUINTANA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Junior featherweight Toshiaki Nishioka enters the ratings at eight after stopping Jhonny Gonzalez

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 52-3 (46)
2. **VITALI KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 37-2 (36)
3. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 25-0-1 (17)
4. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN** Russia 17-0 (12)
5. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 50-1 (34)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS** Philadelphia, PA 34-1 (18)
7. **CHRIS ARREOLA** Riverside, CA 27-0 (24)
8. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** Ukraine 29-0 (19)
9. **DAVID HAYE** England 22-1 (21)
10. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA 43-8-1 (29)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 41-3 (29)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 37-1 (27)
3. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 37-5 (11)
4. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Belize 42-12-1 (21)
5. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** Argentina 44-1-2 (24)
6. **SERGIO MORA** Los Angeles, CA 21-1-1 (5)
7. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Ukraine 36-0 (22)
8. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 32-3-1 (23)
9. **JAMES KIRKLAND** Austin, TX 25-0 (22)
10. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Haiti 30-1 (19)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 42-0-2 (22)
2. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 36-1-1 (15)
3. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 37-1-2 (27)
4. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 28-4 (20)
5. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 28-1-2 (20)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO** Puerto Rico 19-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 25-4-1 (13)
8. **TAKAHIRO AOH** Japan 17-1-1 (8)
9. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ** Mexico 38-11-1 (23)
10. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA** Cuba 15-0 (13)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 43-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 38-5 (34)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 32-2 (22)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 25-0 (23)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 38-1 (27)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 36-2 (31)
6. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 28-1 (11)
7. **BERNARD DUNNE** Ireland 28-1 (15)
8. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** Japan 34-4-3 (21)
9. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 34-2-2 (21)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 40-7 (34)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 26-2 (10)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO** Panama 25-1-1 (8)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 21-2-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 22-2 (18)
5. **JOSEPH AGBEKO** Ghana 26-1 (22)
6. **ABNER MARES** Mexico 18-0 (11)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO** Venezuela 17-0 (10)
8. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ** Panama 27-3 (20)
9. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico 39-2-1 (29)
10. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 54-7-2 (36)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: TOMASZ ADAMEK
Poland 37-1 (25)

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 21-2 (11)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 41-2-1 (31)
3. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 36-3-2 (28)
4. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 26-1-1 (10)
5. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 25-1 (20)
6. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany 29-4-1 (18)
7. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 26-1-1 (19)
8. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 21-1 (15)
9. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 14-1-3 (6)
10. **MATT GODFREY**
Providence, RI 18-1 (10)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 49-5-1 (32)
2. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 28-0 (17)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 49-12-2 (33)
4. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 30-0 (17)
5. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 27-6 (19)
6. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 53-5 (39)
7. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 42-4-1 (24)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-0 (15)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 32-3 (17)
10. **YUSAF MACK**
Philadelphia, PA 27-2-2 (16)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 41-1 (31)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 24-0 (19)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 25-0 (21)
4. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 28-2 (21)
5. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 27-3-2 (17)
6. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 28-1 (20)
7. **KAROLY BALZSAY**
Hungary 21-0 (15)
8. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
Little Rock, AR 28-3-1 (17)
9. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 19-0 (12)
10. **DENIS INKIN**
Russia 34-1 (24)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK
Youngstown, OH 35-1 (31)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 29-0 (23)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 32-2-1 (14)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 30-3 (15)
4. **KHOREN GEVOR**
Armenia 30-3 (16)
5. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 37-1 (27)
6. **RANDY GRIFFIN**
Louisville, KY 24-2-3 (12)
7. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 38-12 (23)
8. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 62-8-1(43)
9. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 26-2 (17)
10. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 36-3 (23)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 46-5 (39)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 33-1 (27)
3. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 37-6 (27)
4. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 35-2 (20)
5. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
Puerto Rico 26-2 (20)
6. **ANDRE BERTO**
Winter Haven, FL 24-0 (19)
7. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 29-4 (14)
8. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 37-6 (25)
9. **ISAAC HLATSWAYO**
South Africa 28-1-1 (10)
10. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
Ukraine 29-0 (20)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 49-3-2 (37)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
Palm Springs, CA 24-0 (11)
2. **RICKY HATTON**
England 45-2 (32)
3. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 37-2-2 (22)
4. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
Ukraine 31-2-1 (13)
5. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (5)
6. **JUAN URANGO**
Colombia 21-1-1 (16)
7. **KENDALL HOLT**
Paterson, NJ 25-3 (13)
8. **RICARDO TORRES**
Colombia 33-2 (29)
9. **HERMAN NGOUDJO**
Cameroon 17-3 (9)
10. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina 25-1 (24)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 50-4-1 (37)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 34-2 (17)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Cuba 36-4-1 (22)
3. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 25-0 (25)
4. **ROLANDO REYES**
Mexico 31-4-2 (20)
5. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
Australia 25-2 (21)
6. **ALI FUNEKA**
South Africa 30-2-2 (25)
7. **YURI ROMANOV**
Belarus 21-2 (14)
8. **BREIDIS PRESCOTT**
Colombia 21-0 (18)
9. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
Washington, DC 28-0 (19)
10. **AMIR KHAN**
England 20-1 (15)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 48-7-2 (31)
2. **MALCOLM KLASSEN**
South Africa 24-4-2 (15)
3. **MZONKE FANA**
South Africa 28-4 (11)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico 22-0-1 (13)
5. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 36-4-1 (19)
6. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 47-4-1 (34)
7. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela 26-0 (17)
8. **NICKY COOK**
England 29-2 (16)
9. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
Gilroy, CA 23-1-1 (16)
10. **SERGEY GULYAKEVICH**
Belarus 26-1 (12)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia 32-1-1 (26)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 32-3 (27)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 13-1 (8)
4. **Z GORRES**
Philippines 29-2-2 (16)
5. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 51-5-1 (39)
6. **DIMITRI KIRILOV**
Russia 29-4-1 (9)
7. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan 23-4 (8)
8. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
Japan 14-1 (10)
9. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 28-5-1 (20)
10. **SIMPHIWE NONGQAYI**
South Africa 15-0 (6)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines 21-1 (14)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 35-2-3 (22)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 72-3-1 (38)
4. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
Thailand 47-1-1 (20)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 29-0-2 (18)
6. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 33-5-2 (15)
7. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 20-0 (13)
8. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa 23-2 (16)
9. **BERNARD INOM**
France 19-1-1 (10)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
Mexico 29-4-1 (22)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 32-0 (6)

1. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 25-2 (15)
2. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 35-5 (19)
3. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
Mexico 20-1-1 (16)
4. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 28-2-2 (20)
5. **CESAR CANCHILA**
Colombia 27-2 (21)
6. **JUANITO RUBILLAR**
Philippines 46-11-7 (22)
7. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 27-3-1 (11)
8. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 25-5-2 (14)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina 19-1 (10)
10. **EDREN DAPUDONG**
Philippines 14-2 (8)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua 23-0 (20)
2. **RAUL GARCIA**
Mexico 26-0-1 (16)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand 30-0 (12)
4. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines 23-4-1 (20)
5. **MILAN MELINDO**
Philippines 18-0 (5)
6. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 62-7-5 (31)
7. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 23-3 (9)
8. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines 24-1-3 (14)
9. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
South Africa 19-0 (15)
10. **JUAN PALACIOS**
Nicaragua 25-2 (20)

By Jeff Ryan

A Bore-Us Line

Your intrepid film critic (call me Jeffrey "Cowardly" Lyons) didn't know what to expect from the feature film, *Tyson*, a documentary that was probably long overdue but, judging from early box office figures, isn't connecting with filmgoers the same way a prime Tyson's right hand connected with his challenger's ribcages.

Tyson isn't a bad way to spend an afternoon if you're a mainstreamer with a rudimentary knowledge of the Sweet Science. But if you make your living writing about the sport or are the kind of fan who knows its subtleties, the flick isn't going to break much new ground when it comes to the life and career of one of the most fascinating figures in the history of any sport.

The biggest problem with *Tyson* is that the film is narrated by Tyson. Director James Toback has him set the scenes, relive what transpired, offer analysis, and try to put everything into perspective. Now while we certainly didn't need yet another parade of the Joyce Carol Oateses and Pete Hamills playing amateur shrink, having Tyson try to figure out why he does what he does is like getting a deaf guy to explain how the piano is out of tune.

PHOTO BY BRAD BARKET/GETTY IMAGES

***Tyson and director James Toback attend the New York screening of* Tyson**

Most annoying was Tyson's omission of important characters in his life, people he has feuded with and thus pretends didn't exist. Former trainer Teddy Atlas appears in many film clips but is never once referred to. Trainer Kevin Rooney, a vital part of Iron Mike's early success, is mentioned in one old piece of tape, but never has his name uttered again.

To its credit, there are a few revelations in the film. Tyson informs us that he was suffering from gonorrhea the night he blasted out Trevor Berbick. He talks of the ugliness of prison life, of inmates tossing feces in the faces of guards. And Tyson tells of a beat down he gave his former promoter, Don King, in front of some elderly women outside the Beverly Hills Hotel. Tyson calls King a "wretched, slimy, reptilian, motherf___er," perhaps proving that the passage of time has made the ex-champ a great deal wiser.

Though Tyson is more candid and introspective than we've ever seen him, one can't help but feel that there is plenty he's still not telling us. His criminal behavior on the streets is no doubt more graphic than he's willing to share here. His shocking defeat to Buster Douglas was in part the result of technical and strategic mistakes, not, as he tries to convince us, his merely being under-trained. And in light of who he is, what is Tyson's philosophy for raising his six children? That, too, goes unanswered.

As documentaries go, *Tyson* wasn't nearly as interesting as the recently released, *Every Little Step*, the story of how *A Chorus Line* made it to Broadway. Mike Tyson may have been one singular sensation in his own right, but you have to wonder what still might be hidden behind *his* curtain.

Some other random observations this month …

•A hell of a fighter, but not a Hall of a fighter: Manny Pacquiao did more than just knock out Ricky Hatton. He left "Hitman" looking like a Peanuts comic strip, you know, the one where Charlie Brown is pitching, the batter smashes a line drive back through the box, and poor Chuck ends up flipped into the air with his socks and shoes flying off.

Before the bout, more than a few observers were referring to Hatton as a "future Hall of Famer." Well, excuse me for piling on a guy who needs a hug a lot more than he needs criticism right now, but Hatton's crash against Pac-

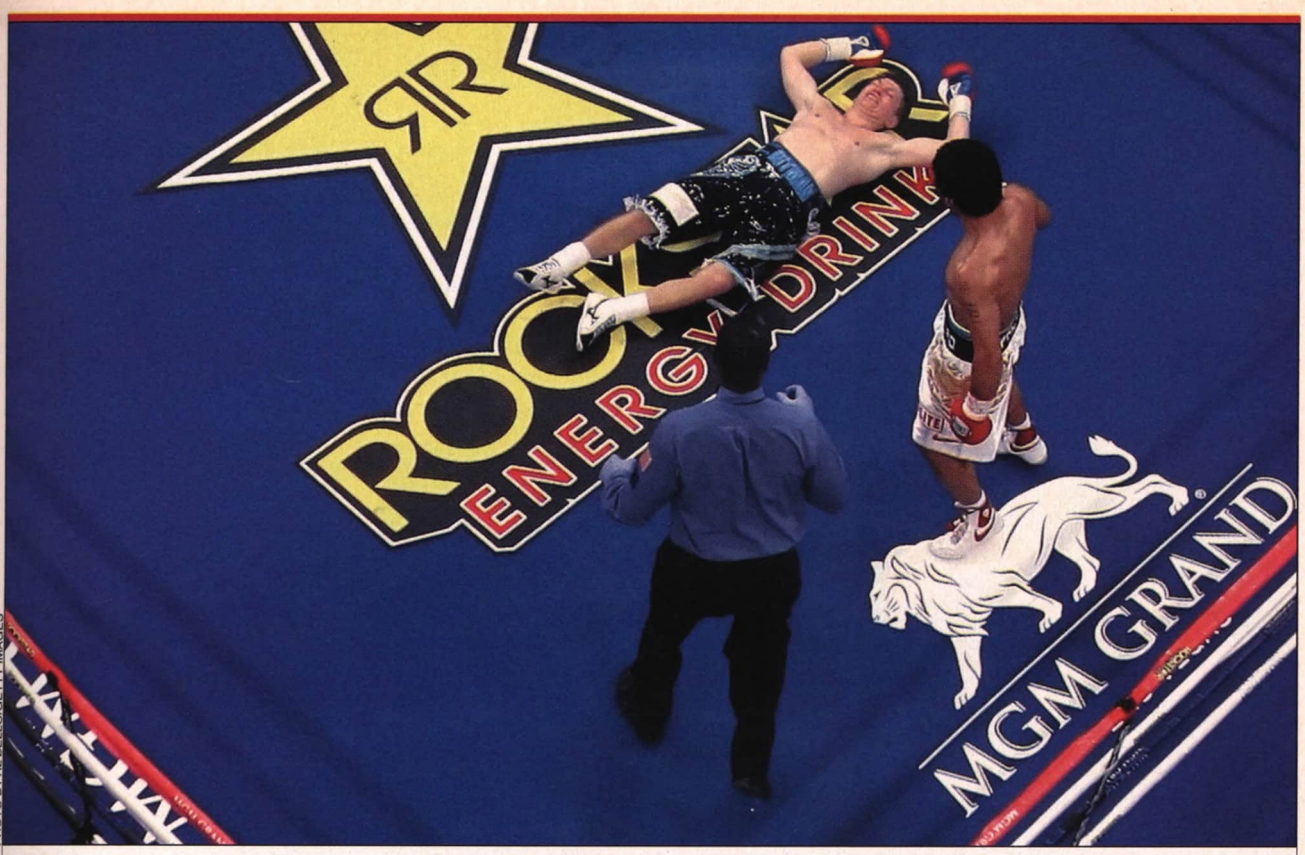


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton flattened

quiao assured that the Briton won't have to worry about writing any induction speech.

Hatton's record simply isn't Hall-worthy. For starters, his list of accomplishments is thin. Forcing Kostya Tszyu to surrender on his stool rates as the high point of Hatton's career. But Hitman's other biggest wins came against guys who were either faded (Jose Luis Castillo, Vince Phillips) or nothing special to begin with (Juan Urango, Luis Collazo, Paulie Malignaggi, Juan Lazcano.) Hatton won two alphabet crowns, but just one world championship recognized by THE RING.

More importantly, in his two superfights, he was knocked out conclusively by Floyd Mayweather and Pacquiao. Against the latter, Hatton wasn't even in the fight. In light of that flop against Pacquiao, allow me to suggest some new lyrics for that awful song the drunken Hatton fans like to fill the air with before, during, and after their hero's bouts:

There's only one Ricky Hatton,
The guy one bomb quickly flattened,
He showed some big balls,
Retirement calls,
Get out before your brain's in la-la land.

•"B-Hop" should vote for the hanging Chad: Okay, so maybe light heavyweight contender Chad Dawson didn't look like a Bob Foster/Michael Spinks hybrid in his rematch with Antonio Tarver. But Dawson won and stayed undefeated. And he is overdue for a bump up in pay and upgrade in the level of his competition. A showdown with Bernard Hopkins would provide both.

Dawson's brain trust, believing the 44-year-old Hopkins doesn't want to get anywhere near "Bad" Chad, is instead talking about matchups with the likes of Mikkel Kessler, Kelly Pavlik, or Jermain Taylor. Gee, that could cause such a

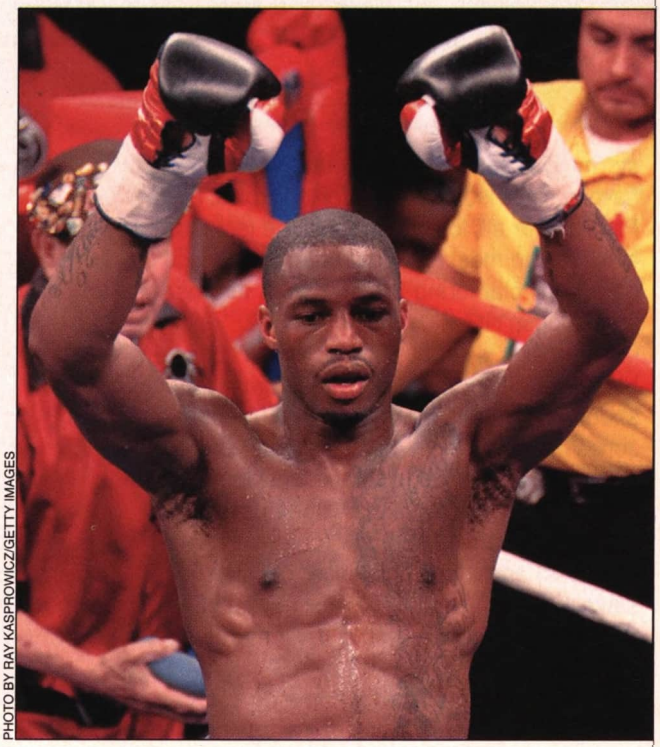


PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/GETTY IMAGES

Ryan says Dawson has earned a shot at B-Hop

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from a changeup to a screwball:

•Pacquiao tossed the ceremonial first pitch to home plate on a fly before a San Francisco Giants game in April. What's the big deal? Well, Pac-Man is supposed to be better at working the speed bag than the resin bag, and we watched Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Seaver bounce a similar throw in the dirt last season. Ask 37 kayo victims and they'll tell you that Pacquiao has definitely mastered the high hard one.

•We in the media aren't supposed to root for one fighter to beat another, but how many non-British writers do you think were pulling for Hatton? If Hitman won impressively, he might have landed a rematch with Mayweather. If Hatton lost, on the other hand, we'd probably get to cover Pacquiao-Mayweather. And that's a matchup that has scribes salivating so much, they'll probably be issued commemorative bibs along with their press credentials.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pac-Man lands a high hard one

•Do you think Tyson regrets that ridiculous facial tattoo? It's hard to imagine that a person would want to walk around with his head looking like the Cincinnati Bengals' football helmet.

•Remember when the boxing action on ESPN Classic was so good that you'd turn off a live bout to watch one from 35 years ago? Well, as the song says, those were the days, my friend. Now, we too often get a diet of meaningless matchups we had no interest in the first time they aired. What a sad comedown for a network whose logo of a generic athlete celebrating always looked to me like a boxer.

•Ferdie Pacheco's mouth must be the reason they invented duct tape.

storming of the box office that the National Guard might have to be called out to control the crowd. Middleweight king Pavlik, after all, looked so good the last time he moved up in weight, to meet Hopkins. And Taylor's loss to Carl Froch has us all clamoring to see him in another big fight real soon, doesn't it?

If Hopkins is serious about not just continuing his career but also flipping the bird to the doomsayers, then Dawson should be his opponent of choice. A return bout with Roy Jones may have more marquee value, and a shot at Tomasz Adamek's cruiserweight championship might result in more hardware for the Hopkins trophy case, but Dawson is a strong, pressuring southpaw (one who handed Adamek his only loss) and a true challenge. Go after a guy who represents the most risk with the least reward? Sounds like something only a Hopkins would do, if merely to confound the experts and defy logic once more.

If the promoters need a name for such a matchup, one pitting a 27-year-old in his prime against a senior citizen, here's a suggestion: Dawson's Creak.

•Another gem, ho-hum: HBO Sports does documentaries the way Angelina Jolie does pouty lips. Tell me that somebody does it better, and I'll tell you to get off the drugs you're taking. The latest HBO Sports masterpiece (sorry for the redundancy) was *The Thrilla In Manila*, a look at the third Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier clash primarily through the eyes of "Smokin' Joe." In a word: riveting.

In contrast to *Tyson*, this documentary showed and told us plenty of things we didn't know. From Frazier revealing that if it was up to him, he'd have risked his life to answer the bell for the 15th round, to learning that one venue considered for the first Ali-Frazier shootout was an airborne 747. It was neat watching Frazier view a replay of The Thrilla for the first time ("You're too far away, Smoke," he said, as though giving himself instructions in the corner) and seeing the humble living conditions of his apartment above his North Philly gym. And we now know that his son Marvis does an imitation of Howard Cosell that would shame Billy Crystal ("Down goes Frazier!").

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Smokin' Joe revealing in new documentary

What made *The Thrilla In Manila* stand out, though, was the way that it never let the viewer get comfortable. Ali's ring brilliance was offset by his cruelty to Frazier, the level of which went far beyond hype. We want the rivals to embrace and reminisce on a porch swing somewhere, so it's unsettling to hear Frazier say that he thinks Ali's current physical condition is payback for bad behavior, adding, "God marks it down."

Ali's former physician, Ferdie Pacheco, came off looking like a buffoon in the piece, calling Frazier "dumb" and saying that infamous toy gorilla Ali produced at a press conference "looked like Joe Frazier." Interview subjects dropping their guards, though, makes for great television. And boxing documentaries don't get better than this one.

•Greg Page stirred emotions ... but not always the right ones: Normally, when a well-known fighter dies, we columnists say lots of nice things about the man's career. This is the exception.

PHOTO BY DAVID R. LUTMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Page arrives at the grand opening of the Muhammad Ali Center in 2005

Page's death at the age of 50 was hastened by the serious injuries he sustained in a 2001 kayo loss to clubfighter Dale Crowe, a bout Page wouldn't have taken had he been wealthy and satisfied with his accomplishments. And he should have been. A big man with his combination of speed and power, someone good enough to have knocked out Gerrie Coetzee, should have had a solid career. Instead, a distaste for training and a general indifference to the game led a flabby Page to lose in his prime to fellow slobs like Tony Tubbs and David Bey. "Page" became a buzzword for wasted potential. He was a poster boy for the sad era of heavyweight mediocrity that existed in the gap between the downfall of Larry Holmes and the ascension of Tyson. Ironically, Page showed far more heart, strength, and determination in coping with his partial paralysis than he ever did at his physical peak.

Page never came close to being the second great heavyweight to come out of Louisville, Kentucky. Just imagine if he did, though, and had played the role of Ali to Tyson's Frazier. *Two* stories would have had far better endings. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Hand Cream Bob Remains In Margarito's Corner

Even if promoter Bob Arum and all the king's horses and all the king's liars and cheats manage to fish Antonio Margarito's license out of the sludge, they'll still never get the smell out.

Under the terms of his suspension, Margarito and his chief trainer and master of plaster Javier Capetillo can request their licenses back from the California commission at the end of a year. Arum, a Harvard Law grad, is already gearing up for a legal blitzkrieg to get his ethics-challenged fighter back in the game one way or another. Cherry-picking his way through the report released by the California Justice Department, Arum moved past all the loathsome gunk to fasten instead on a passage he found to his liking. Why, he declared, the laboratory found only "trace elements of sodium and calcium" in Margarito's wraps before his January bout with Shane Mosley. These materials, Arum said, were "more likely to come from hand cream" than plaster of paris.

First of all, even hand cream is a no-no. The rules allow no substances whatsoever. Besides which, Arum made no mention of the bloodstained chunks of solid plaster the inspector and Mosley's trainer, Naazim Richardson, reportedly shook out of the wraps along with the wet plaster, one chunk over each set of knuckles. Hand cream? *Your honor, there's no proof whatsoever that my client's gun fired any bullets. The hunks of lead dug out of the corpse were more likely to come from a No. 2 pencil.*

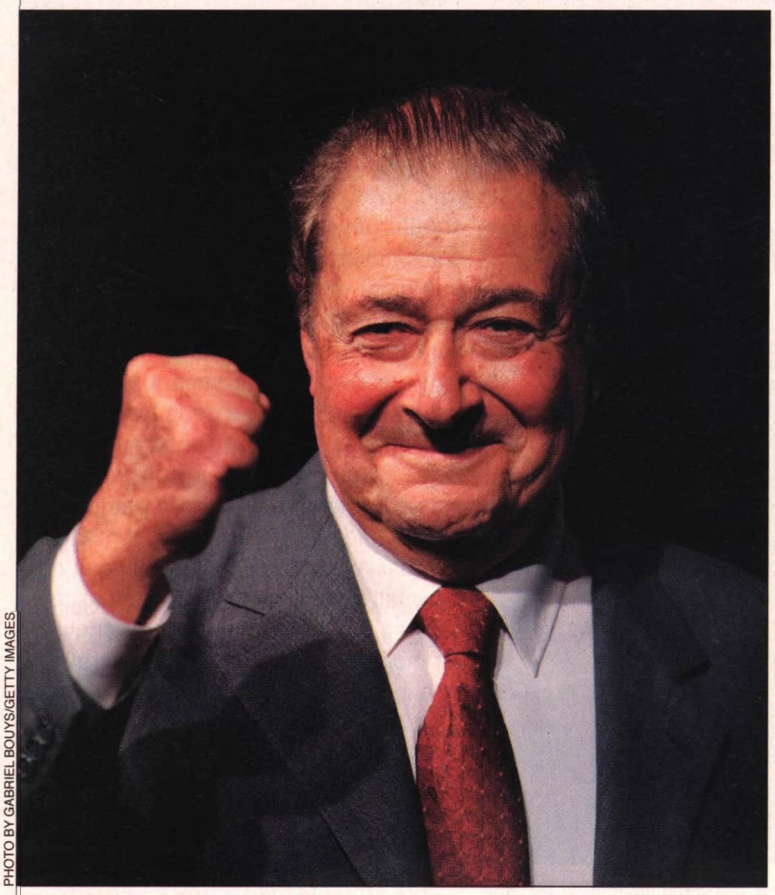


PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/GETTY IMAGES

Arum is fighting the wrong fight

Arum's tale is much like the one told by mothers who tearfully maintain their beloved Tom, Dick, or Harry was always a good, sweet boy—skipping over bothersome details like the kittens he enjoyed torturing, and, oh yeah, the fact that he just shot up the cafeteria with a Kalashnikov.

It's shocking to see an intelligent man like Arum take such an unintelligent position. When you're caught, you're caught. Take your medicine. This man promotes Manny Pacquiao, the finest fighter in the world. You'd think that would help him to lighten up when he's dealt an occasional bad hand. But no, when we discover a dirty sock in the soup, Arum demands we pretend along with him that it's not there. He doesn't appear to worry that his daffy position wins him no friends in the camp of Miguel Cotto, a fighter he also promotes. Cotto and his people believe Margarito used the same illegal weapons against him. So do I. Funny how in the one fight in which we know for sure Margarito went out there without plasto-matic help (against Shane Mosley), his pushing punches landed with little effect.

A cynic might have decided, *hmm*, yes, the guy has this ugly habit of sneaking building materials into his gloves, but there are lots more Mexicans than Puerto Ricans. However, Arum's mistaken if he thinks his hideous position ingratiates him with the Mexican community. Regardless of nationality, fans don't cotton to wea-

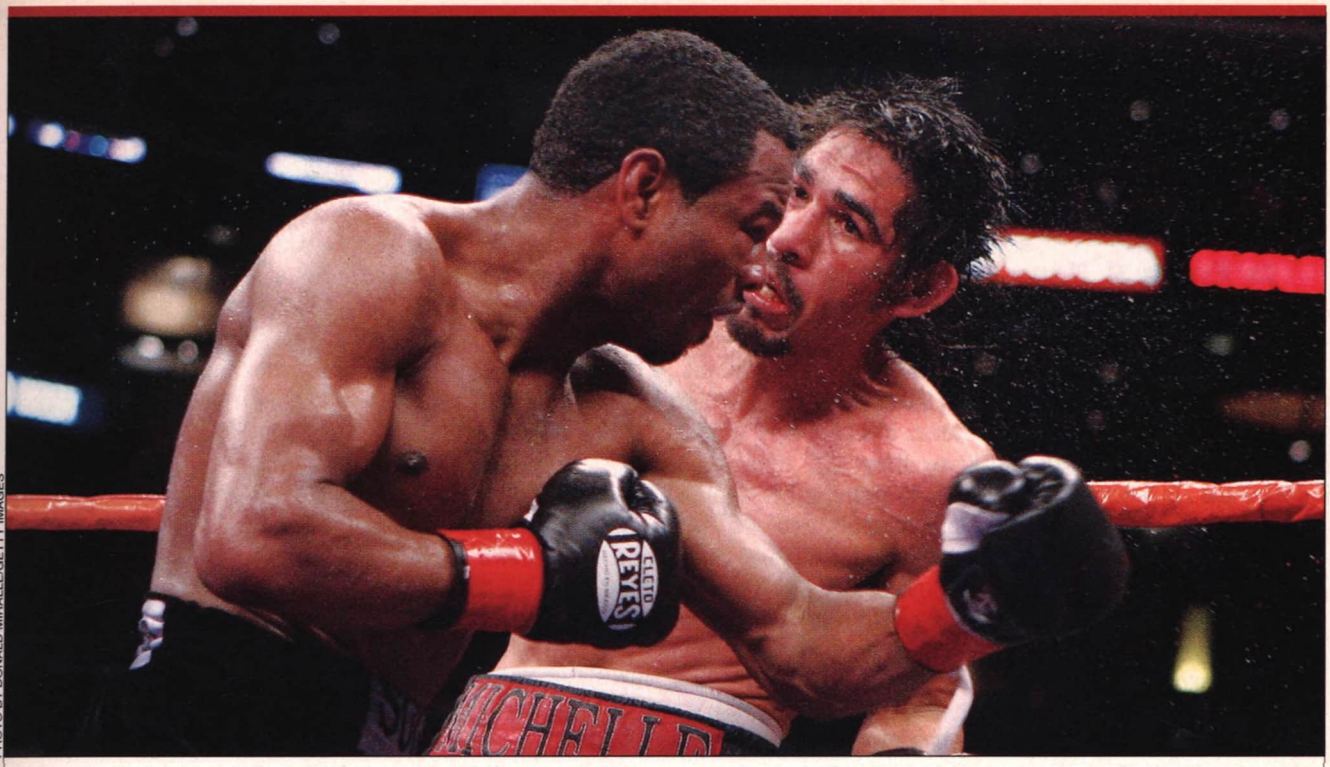


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Mosley handled plaster-less Margarito with ease

sels who load their gloves with bone-breaking substances.

Fortunately for Margarito and Capetillo, the commission, upon discovering the loads, didn't lawyer up immediately and establish what law books call a chain of custody. Otherwise the plaster-masters might have been charged with a criminal conspiracy. But boxing inspectors, unlike police, aren't used to satisfying the demands of criminal statutes. They were mostly just thinking about putting on a clean fight for the fans filling up Staples Center in Los Angeles. This priority may have left them open to the kinds of technicalities that so often mutilate reason in our over-lawyered society. But as for the logic of Arum's argument, ask any fighter whether it's possible for a boxer not to know there are illegal substances hidden in his wraps.

In a related development, the commission's chief inspector, Dean Lohuis, has been forced into early retirement. You may recall that it was Richardson, not the inspector, who initially discovered the plaster. But guess what. Lohuis' sacking, contrary to rumor, had nothing to do with justice or accountability. He wasn't the inspector who screwed up. Lohuis was sacked at the tail end of a vendetta started by then-director Armando Garcia. It's nothing new when hacks

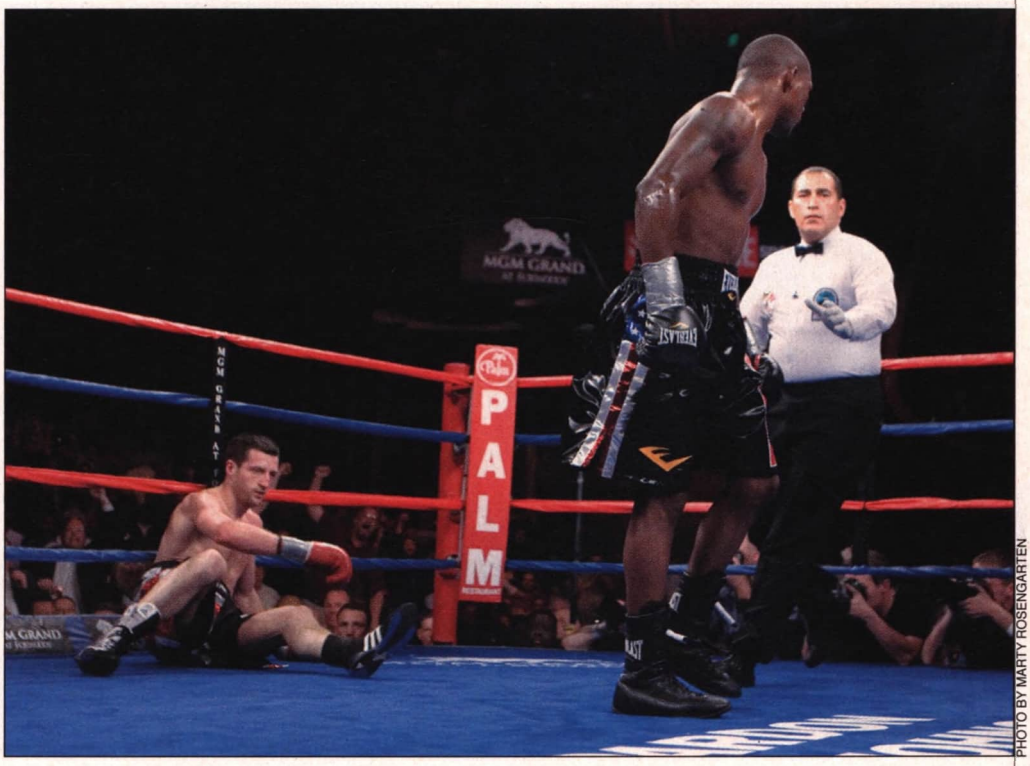


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Tough guy Froch had to come off the floor to kayo Taylor

try to dispense favors to their own people. But then Garcia was himself forced to resign over issues that included a sexual harassment claim made by a woman in his office, confirmed Commissioner John Frierson. The process started against Lohuis kept running like a headless chicken. The ugliness of this story just won't quit.

Is Froch A New Toney? Carl Froch's 12th-round come-from-behind stoppage of Jermain Taylor was reminiscent of a fight eighteen years earlier when middleweight underdog James Toney, also behind on the cards, exploded into stardom by stopping the previously undefeated Michael Nunn in the 11th round. Those who contend Froch just got lucky should know they said that about Toney too. But he went on to win 45 more fights and be recognized as one of the finest fighters of his time.

Taylor deserves credit for his brave stand. He did all he could do, but Froch did just a little more. Together, the two of them gave us a terrific fight and a 12th round that won't easily be forgotten by anyone fortunate enough to see it.

Silly Question Department: Jim Gray asked Taylor whether referee Mike Ortega did the right thing to stop it. Taylor was unconscious on his feet. How would he know?

Gritty Brits: You have to admire the nerve of Froch to take his brand new title across the Atlantic and risk it against Taylor. Seems like we're seeing plenty of brash Brits these days. They would certainly include David Haye, who jumped up from cruiserweight to challenge the mighty Wladimir Klitschko in Germany, and Ricky Hatton, who even accepted a slightly smaller piece of the purse money in order to keep his date with the great Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas.

Fans To The End: You'd have thought the global economic crash would seriously reduce the number of British fans willing to follow their heroes to distant locales, but then you'd have been wrong. As for their singing, just because it seems strange to Americans, that doesn't make it bad. And it was downright poignant when the Brits kept it up even after Hatton was knocked silly.

Good Man Freddie: Floyd Mayweather vs. Juan Manuel Marquez was not the welterweight fight most of us wanted to see Mayweather involved in, seeing as how Marquez is a lightweight. But like Mayweather, he's also a great fighter, and it's hard not to get excited about the contest. Freddie Roach says two counterpunchers add up to boredom, but at some point a fight will break out in there.

Speaking of Freddie, yes, we live in a cynical world, but some things are still for real, and he's one of them. Everyone can see he seems like a good guy. But people wonder what happens when you take the TV cameras away.

Here's the answer. No change.

Years ago, my wife and I were at a huge, crowded banquet and needed to find a specific person at a specific location before everyone sat down. Moving through the throng was tough going, and I remember telling my wife I wasn't

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Terry Mirlow, one of the thousands of Hatton fans who flew to Vegas to support their man

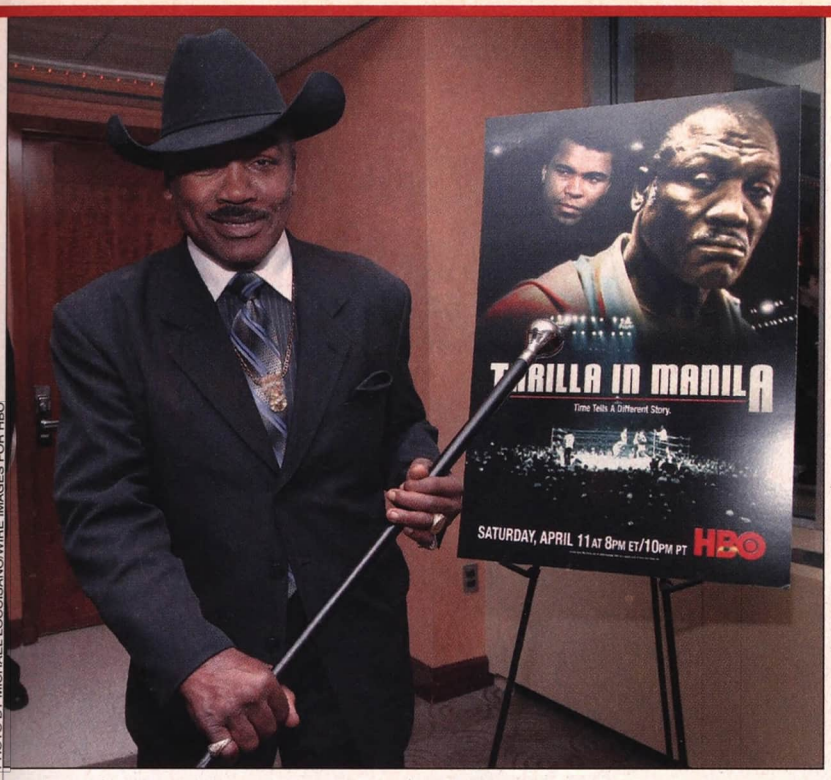


PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOCCISANO/WIRE IMAGES FOR HBO

Unforgiving Frazier hypes new documentary

sure of the way. That's when somebody who overheard stepped forward and gave me perfect directions. It was Freddie. This was before I had a column, and he didn't know me at all. He was just being kind to strangers—like a regular guy, except nicer.

Ali vs. Frazier, 2009: Although it wasn't news to hardcore fans, HBO's *Thrilla In Manila* movie exposed many Americans for the first time to the appalling way Muhammad Ali treated Joe Frazier, a friend who'd helped him when he was down. But I think even those of us who know the story were shocked by the depth of Frazier's lingering hatred.

For a long time the general public despised Ali for refusing military conscription. Years later he was perceived as a living saint. The public was wrong both times. But I expect that if the young Ali had just some of the wisdom he's acquired in the years since, his behavior toward Frazier would have been less lamentable. Ali is now contrite. Joe should let the magic of time and his own magnificent courage heal those wounds.

Futch: To the Nevada commission, for finally awarding a superfight (Hatton-Pacquiao) to Kenny Bayless. I don't know of a finer referee.

Magoo: Welter Selcuk "mini-Tyson" Aydin correctly got the split decision over said Said Ouali in Primm, Nevada. But no thanks to Magoo-winning Adelaide Byrd, who scored it 114-113 Ouali. Because Aydin lost a point for hitting low, that means she found six rounds for Ouali. It's a mystery how she could give so much credit to the fighter who was backing up and not committing to his punches.

Mago Lite: Middleweight Daniel Jacobs, on the way to his unanimous decision over Michael Walker on the Pacquiao-Hatton undercard, executed a takedown in round three. In round seven he slammed his opponent with an intentional headbutt. But there were no warnings from referee Vic Drakulich, at least none that we could see. Either Drakulich cautioned Walker verbally without signaling his rulings or he ignored or failed to see flagrant fouls. Either way, he was wrong. Referees are supposed to let the crowd know what they're doing. ■

Ivan Goldman authored the boxing-based novel* The Barfighter*, released this year by The Permanent Press.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/GETTY IMAGES

Watch your head, Jacobs

[Camera Clicks]

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

From now on, the initials "JMM" stand for Juan Manuel Mariachi. Doing his best Itzhak Perlman impression, the reigning world lightweight champion took a break from the press tour for his fight with Floyd Mayweather to "fiddle" around for a moment, delighting fans with a well-practiced rendition of "Hot Cross Buns." One area in which Marquez is a natural on the violin: He instinctively keeps his chin tucked.

PHOTO BY ALONSO CRESPO/JAM MEDIA/LATINCONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

Please, we beg you, sacrifice the belts! Burn them all! At the press conference to announce something called the Mayan Challenge in Mexico City in April, some Mayan dancers got their hands on assorted WBC and regional straps, but alas, there would be no burning of superfluous trinkets on this day.

PHOTO BY LARS BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Watch out, Koji Sato: Frankie "The Surgeon" Randall is going to sue you for gimmick infringement! Sato weighed in for his April fight against middleweight titlist Felix Sturm at 159.5, which means the Japanese challenger was actually 159.49 if you deduct the weight of the mask. Too bad he couldn't hide his chin from Sturm in the ring, as Sato lost his unbeaten record via seventh-round kayo.

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

He can fight, he can sing—is there anything Manny Pacquiao can't do? Actually, there is: He can't listen to his government when it asks him to stay in America to prevent the possible spread of swine flu to the Philippines. Despite appeals for Pacquiao to postpone his trip home after his knockout of Ricky Hatton, "Pac-Man" got on the plane and proceeded to sing at his victory concert in Manila. We guess Pacquiao figured he could just knock swine flu out with a left hand if it happened to follow him home.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

It's not quite the hottest selection of round-card girls we've ever seen, but hey, after a few Tecates, they don't look so bad. Actually, these are some rowdy Ricky Hatton fans dressed as cheerleaders for the weigh-in prior to "The Hitman's" fight against Manny Pacquiao. They didn't have much to cheer about the next evening, but with any luck, they were too drunk to care.

By Paul Salgado

David Lemieux Middleweight

Twenty-year-old David Lemieux stood in a neutral corner, bit down hard on his mouthpiece, slammed his gloves together, and then yelled across the ring at journeyman Thomas Davis, whom he had just floored a mere 40 seconds into their bout.

"C'mon!" the baby-faced Lemieux grunted. "Get up and fight!"

Mere seconds away from becoming Lemieux's 15th knockout victim, Davis was anything but another hand-picked opponent meant to pad the record of the young kayo artist from Montreal. Once a respectable competitor at the welter and junior middleweight classes, Davis was known to have extended a roster of notable fighters, including Joel Julio, and even held a one-round stoppage over Kendall Holt, albeit five years ago.

Against Lemieux, Davis gave his best performance trash-talking at the weigh-in in an effort to intimidate his youthful opponent. In the ring, he didn't last a full minute.

Although frustrating, Lemieux understands the plight of a knockout artist is the ability to thrill in the moment, but leave a wake of lingering questions. It has been the narrative of his career since turning pro in 2007 at the age of 18 and building a perfect 15-0 (15) record. People are impressed by the middleweight's blinding fists and explosive power, but come away thinking he faced just another straw opponent. They ask: What will happen when he finally faces someone who stands in and throws back? Are his handlers concealing a weak chin? Does he have the stamina to go rounds? How good are his skills, really?

Still, Lemieux's colorful trainer, Russ Anber, who also hosts a weekly boxing news TV show, *In This Corner,* insists that, like Davis, several of the fighter's last opponents were selected for their ability to go rounds. Lemieux simply hits *that* hard.

Anber has trained Lemieux since he walked through the doors of the Ring 83 gym when he was nine, a high-risk kid who was regularly thrown out of school for fighting. Despite the requisite early gym beatings, Lemieux remained focused and quickly improved.

Even so, trouble at school continued, so Anber gave his young protégé an ultimatum: Either find discipline inside the classroom or be thrown out of the gym for good. Since then, Lemieux never again had disciplinary issues, and Anber knew he had a special kid willing to do anything for his love of boxing.

Negotiating Lemieux's career has brought special challenges for Anber, since his charge went 48-12 in the amateurs, winning four national junior championships. By age 17, Lemieux was widely recognized for punching power, but Anber faced the uncertain decision of graduating his teenage fighter to the senior national team, where he would compete internationally against fully matured men, in most cases in their mid- to late-20s.

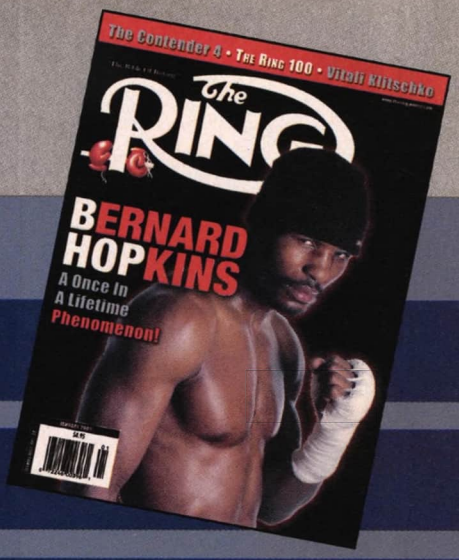
(Continued on Page 105)

Pro Record

2007		
April 14	Jose Candelario Torres, Montreal	KO 2
May 12	Jose Luis Alvarez, Montreal	KO 2
June 8	Andres Lovera, Montreal	KO 2
Sept. 15	Rene Fernandez, Montreal	KO 2
Dec. 7	Jesus Ortega, Montreal	KO 1
2008		
Feb. 9	Guillermo Cortez, Montreal	KO 1
May 9	Rodney Green, Montreal	KO 4
June 6	Julio Gonzalez, Montreal	KO 2
July 11	Oswaldo Gonzalez, Montreal	KO 2
Aug. 1	Ulises Duarte, Montreal	KO 2
Oct. 4	Lance Moody, Montreal	KO 1
Nov. 1	Patrick Tessier, Montreal	KO 2
2009		
Jan. 30	Rogelio Sanchez, Montreal	KO 3
March 7	Luis Roberto Reyes, Montreal	KO 1
April 18	Thomas Davis, Montreal	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOSE	DRAW	KOs
15	15	0	0	15

The RING



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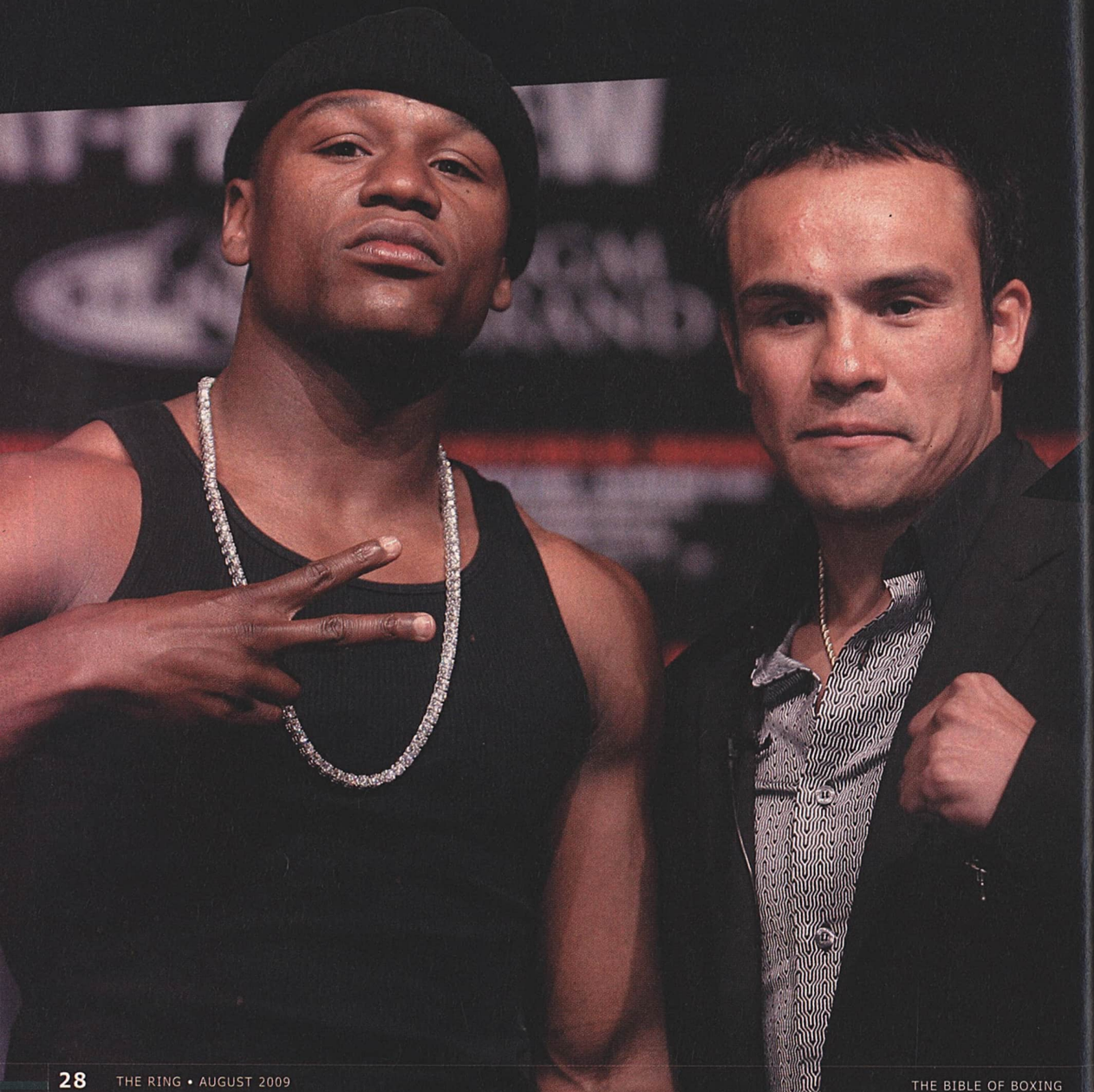
MONEY$ GAMBLE

Will Marquez Ruin Mayweather's Master Plan?



By David Mayo
PHOTOS BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Boxing fans occupy a unique position in the sports world, if only for their unabated propensity for chewing up their best athletes with unyielding new physical demands. Fight the bigger guy. Fight the faster guy. Fight the harder puncher. Fight until we find your limits, the challenge you cannot conquer. Then, satiate us again by demonstrating how you bounce back from it.

The spate of recent retirements by undefeated fighters has tested patience for that very reason, none more than Floyd Mayweather's, whose decision to leave the sport defied not only fans' demands, but also all traditional logic. With the pound-for-pound crown planted firmly upon his head, rarely seriously challenged, never legitimately knocked down, still youthful, at the height of the marketability he so vocally craved, and with more enriching fights emerging—including a coffer-padding rematch with Oscar De La Hoya, which he spurned—Mayweather walked away.

And the boxing world cried foul.

Truth be told, no fighter can be criticized for leaving the meat grinder before it consumes him, though his legacy certainly can suffer for it. Yet Mayweather's retirement was different because so few believed

In his most recent fight, Marquez weighed 134½ pounds when he defended The Ring world lightweight championship with ninth-round knockout of Juan Diaz. It remains to be seen if fighting Mayweather at 144 pounds will hamper the highly skilled Mexican, who until recently was campaigning at 130.

it, perhaps not even himself. It was greeted with spurious pessimism from the moment he announced it.

So it is no surprise that when the 32-year-old with the 39-0 (25) record announced he would return July 18 to face world lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez in what is designed as a tune-up—though quite the tune-up, considering Marquez' own lofty pound-for-pound positioning and two memorable wars with boxing's reigning king, Manny Pacquiao—it was greeted with predictable delight.

Mayweather's most ardent fans want to see him finish some new business, most notably against Pacquiao. Others hope that fight—should Mayweather win—leads into a bout with rejuvenated Shane Mosley.

The lathered-up Mayweather haters may be even more delighted by his comeback. Mayweather will have spent more than 19 months idle before entering the ring with Marquez, in a fight with the capacity to be far more dangerous than initial reaction credited it. If he should look bad, a real possibility, given Marquez' ring wit and counterpunching acumen, it could serve to further embolden the dynamic Pacquiao, who answered Mayweather's split-decision win over De La Hoya with a devastating knockout victory to send "The Golden Boy" into retirement, then responded to Mayweather's late-rounds knockout of Ricky Hatton with a disturbing two-round firestorm from which there is some doubt whether the English star can recover.

All that has left the boxing world craving a Pacquiao-Mayweather showdown for supremacy, although early posturing on both sides indicates that could be preceded by an equally interesting fight at the negotiating table. For the first time in the latter years of Mayweather's career, there actually would be some question about whose marketability is greater, a doubt both sides already seem eager to exploit.

Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, told *The Philippine Star* that Pacquiao-Mayweather could be difficult to make because Mayweather's unlicensed adviser, Al Haymon—who enjoys a cozy relationship with HBO, operates amid boxing's shadows as representative to a number of high-profile fighters, and was instrumental in restructuring Mayweather's contract with Arum in 2005, leading the fighter to exercise a buyout clause the following year—is untrustworthy, adding, "I don't want to negotiate with any sleazebags." And before Pacquiao's devastating knockout of Hatton even could be placed in historical context, his trainer, Freddie Roach, began exploring a possible future fight with Mosley, which not only could delay a Pacquiao-Mayweather clash, but also effectively eliminate or diminish one of Mayweather's potential future fights.

Mayweather responded with his own shot over Top Rank's bow, saying the concessions he made to secure

his 2007 fight with De La Hoya would not be repeated.

"When I fought Oscar, I fought at his weight," said Mayweather, who made his only appearance as a junior middleweight in that bout. "I fought in Oscar's ring. I fought with Oscar's gloves. I fought for Oscar's promotional company. I let Oscar have most of the money. That won't happen again."

Mayweather added that Pacquiao is "too small for me," and predicted their fight would not be as competitive as most boxing insiders suspect it could be.

Meantime, he makes his comeback at MGM Grand in Las Vegas against an opponent boxing cognoscenti generally agree is too small for Mayweather, yet who could present all manner of matchup problems.

Marquez, 50-4-1 (37), is the virtual subplot to Mayweather's comeback, even though he will be the other principal. He agreed to fight Mayweather at a catch weight of 144 pounds, even though he never has fought heavier than 135, and only twice at more than 130.

Marquez called out Mayweather after defending THE RING 135-pound belt against Juan Diaz in February, a proposal initially dismissed by most.

Mayweather had not yet committed to any comeback, much less against Marquez. And Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, quickly suggested the weight differential would render the fight difficult to make.

Those obstacles were overcome such that De La Hoya, who promotes Marquez, said he is "positive" his man will score the upset.

"Juan Manuel Marquez beat Joel Casamayor and knocked him out. Then he fought Juan Diaz, a good young fighter, and knocked him out too," De La Hoya said. "People are going to be surprised at how good Marquez really is. He can beat Mayweather."

While neither the promoter nor fighter could be expected to predict anything other than an upset, Marquez insisted he knows "the secret" to beating Mayweather.

"I made it clear, even when Mayweather was away from the sport, that he was the only man I really wanted to fight," Marquez said. "I'm happy that he has come out of retirement and accepted my challenge."

Marquez pursued Mayweather for years, though his cries were muted by his own outcomes. A 2006 loss to Chris John didn't help. Neither did his loss and draw with Pacquiao, although those distance fights were considered somewhat career-enhancing even then, and far more so today.

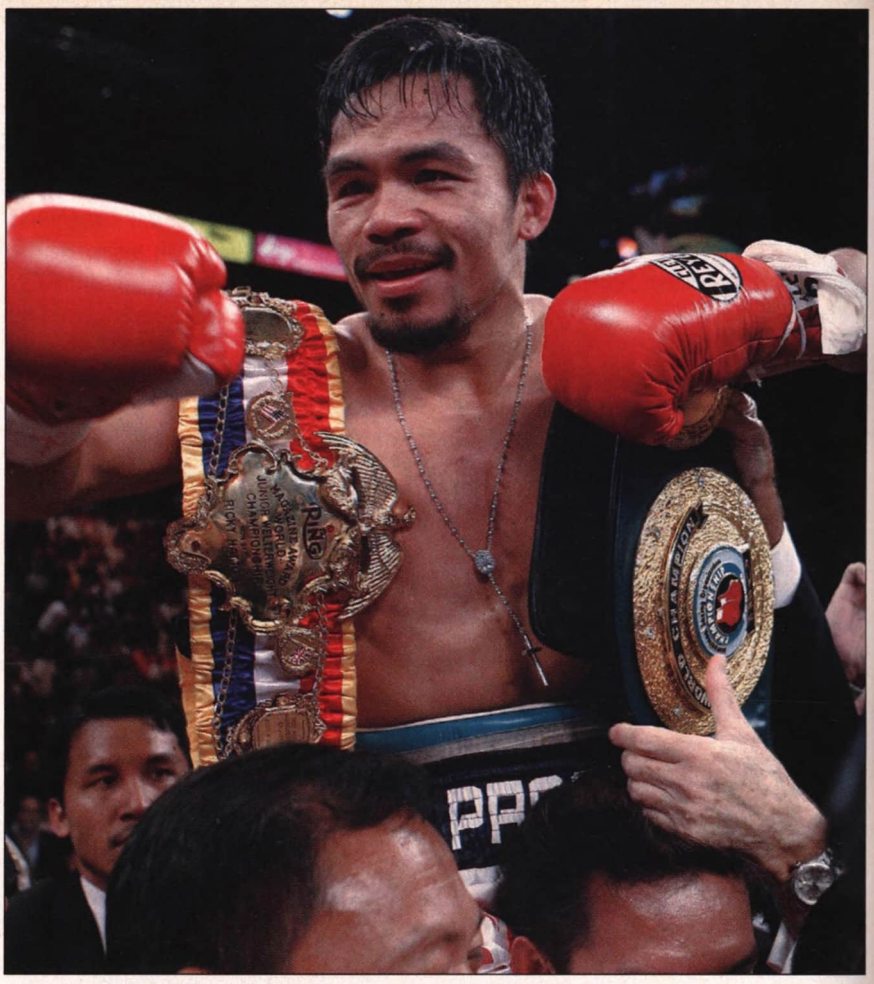
It also didn't benefit Marquez that his two previous appearances on Mayweather-headlined shows produced the most dreadful fights of his career. In 1999, on the night Mayweather beat down and stopped Carlos Gerena, Marquez lost an interminable 12-round clinchfest with Freddie Norwood.

Rust factor: Mayweather has not fought since he stopped Ricky Hatton on December 8, 2007, which means that it will have been more than 19 months between fights when the bell rings on July 18 for his match with Marquez.

And in 2003, on the night Mayweather scored a scintillating knockout of Phillip Ndou, Derrick Gainer spent seven inexcusable rounds running in circles before Marquez could get close enough to headbutt him and mercifully send the pseudo-fight to the scorecards for a technical-decision victory.

Regardless, Mayweather came to regard Marquez as the perfect comeback opponent. The Mexican has a big enough name to satisfy fans. He is small enough physically, with disadvantages of two inches in height and five inches in reach, to allow Mayweather self-examination before pursuing Pacquiao, and works with the promoter for whom Mayweather fought his last two bouts. And since there is no disputing who is the primary attraction, Mayweather-Marquez also offered Mayweather Promotions its first opportunity to present a major event as promoter of record.

"I am not wasting any time with a tune-up fight," Mayweather said at his comeback announcement, on the same day as Pacquiao's win over Hatton. "I'm going straight to the top. Marquez called me out immediately after his victory over Juan Diaz in February and now he gets his wish. What he is going to find out is that you should be very careful what you wish for."



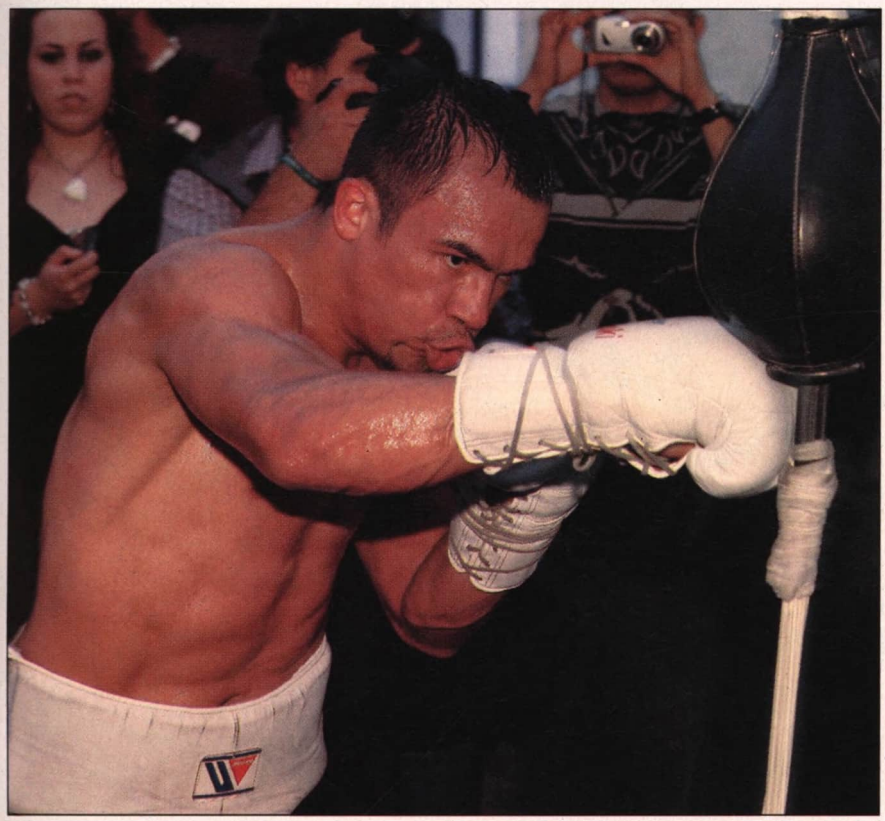
Many fans had hoped that if Mayweather returned it would be for a fight against Manny Pacquiao, who kayoed Hatton in May to win The Ring junior welterweight world championship. But that superfight might never happen if Marquez prevails against Mayweather.

What Mayweather could find out is that, for several reasons, he might be facing a challenge more significant than the early 7-2 odds might indicate.

- Marquez is a master of mid-fight adjustments, as demonstrated most recently against Diaz and most famously when he recovered from three first-round knockdowns against Pacquiao to forge a draw in their first fight, in 2004. Mayweather's most recent fights featured opponents who faded down the stretch, if they ever were in the fight at all—De La Hoya, Zab Judah, Hatton, and Carlos Baldomir. Mayweather knew those opponents had tendencies to fade, particularly De La Hoya and Judah, and implemented them as part of his strategy. Marquez' history suggests that won't be the case this time.
- Weight figures to disadvantage Marquez as he fights at a limit nine pounds heavier than anything he has experienced before. But Mayweather must make his lightest limit in more than four years, dating to his 2005 demolition of Arturo Gatti, and do so after a lengthy layoff. The drain on Mayweather to make 144 pounds could negate any theoretical disadvantage Marquez faces in what should be a well-fed training camp for the underdog.
- Mayweather has enjoyed a career-long advantage in counterpunching ability. Even in the most difficult challenge of his career, it was Jose Luis Castillo's earnestness in the first of their two 2002 fights—not his responsiveness—that made Mayweather's first foray into the lightweight division a long night. Mayweather's counterpunching saved him from losing that fight. For the first time, he faces a counterpuncher of similar acumen in Marquez. That potentially could make for a tactical fight, possibly even a dull one, yet also could serve to nullify one of the Mayweather's greatest attributes.
- There seems little doubt that Mayweather will enjoy an advantage in natural athleticism over the 35-year-old Marquez. But how much? No less an authority than Floyd Mayweather Sr. said he believes the Marquez fight will be an easy victory for his son, but when pressed whether he has noticed some slippage in his son's late-career performances, he replied, "Yes, little things—things only I can see." Several years ago, at his boastful peak, even Mayweather admitted, "There are two opponents nobody can beat, Mother Nature and Father Time." His greatest athletic advantages over all previous opponents have been extraordinary speed and outstanding legs. Those also happen to be two of the first attributes any great athlete loses.
- Motivation rarely came into question during the meat of Mayweather's

PHOTO BY EOIN MUNDOW/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is "Money Mayweather" just coming back because he needs ... money? Besides living an extravagant lifestyle, the Lamborghini-driving boxer owes the IRS approximately $6-million and also had millions of dollars' worth if jewelry stolen from his Las Vegas home in 2008.



"Dinamita" workout: Unlike some of Mayweather's recent opponents, Marquez is not known for fading late. In fact, Marquez is famous for making mid-fight adjustments and coming on strong during the second half of fights, just as he did in the first Pacquiao fight.

career. He fought for fame, fortune, his undefeated record, and pound-for-pound recognition. But after his "one more fight" proclamation following his 2006 win over Baldomir, he lamented that he could not take a long vacation, to heal body and mind, before fighting De La Hoya. When he fought once more anyway, against Hatton, he admitted that training had become a chore he no longer enjoyed. He owes more than $6-million in taxes, and while that's nothing new—this is the 10th Internal Revenue Service lien against him since 2004, roughly coinciding with the period since he became a pay-per-view attraction—a difficult 2008 financially also saw him get sued for balking at a contract to buy a Miami home and have more than $7-million worth of jewelry stolen in a home invasion. There is no questioning anyone's motivation for targeting Mayweather. For the self-nicknamed "Money," there is some question now whether that's what all this is about.

Mayweather dismisses all such doubts, promising to "deliver the same electrifying performances I always have." He said he missed the competition and the adoration of fans.

He also stressed that the other leading men who have called him out, including Pacquiao and Mosley, "can get in line, too, because they are going to get their chance."

With such emerging talents as Paul Williams also on the horizon, the promise of a lengthy comeback could offer plenty of opportunity to challenge Mayweather's pristine record, and enhance his legacy far beyond anything he already achieved, if he agrees to pursue such challenges this time around. If Pacquiao's amazing tale proves anything, it is that doing so can build a fighter's reputation far more rapidly than Mayweather's 13-year preservation of an undefeated record did.

Boxing tends to consume its best fighters with such demands, although at the end of a career, losing such challenges is far more forgivable than never engaging them. ■

David Mayo is a freelance writer from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a regular contributor to THE RING.

FROCH GETS HIS BIG PAYOFF WITH 14 SECONDS TO SPARE!

By Brian Doogan

Not even the distance could dilute Jermain Taylor's disdain. Sitting alongside his trainer, Ozell Nelson, the former world middleweight champion insisted that only weeks earlier he did not even know who Carl Froch was.

"Before the fight was agreed, I had never heard of him," he emphasized on a live satellite link-up from his training camp in Miami, Florida, with Froch and the British media assembled in a central London hotel. "I'd be walking down the street and people would ask me who I was fighting next. When I told them it was Carl Froch, they would reply, 'Who is he?' It was kind of embarrassing for me. I've watched a tape of his title

Carl Froch was pretty much an unknown when he came to the United States to defend his super middleweight strap against former middleweight champion Jermain Taylor. But the iron-chinned, hard-punching Englishman changed all that with a thrilling come-from-behind kayo victory.

PHOTOS BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Taylor had Froch in serious early trouble in the third round, knocking him down for the first time in his career. Froch admits he was stunned, and credits his conditioning and recuperative powers for being able to survive the right hand that put him on the deck.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

win since and I've seen nothing there to be concerned about. He can either make his name by beating me or make his name by getting a real beating from me, but he's too slow to cause me any problems."

Froch took Taylor's appraisal in stride. "He is correct in one sense, that the public in the United States don't know who I am, and that's exactly why I've agreed to go over there to fight him, to establish my name," the WBC super middleweight titleholder responded calmly. "I don't find what Taylor has said insulting. Why should I? I know I will stop him because he cannot handle my reach or my power, and he will know who I am when we fight in Foxwoods, Connecticut."

A dramatic, come-from-behind knockout of Taylor with only 14 seconds left in the 12th round announced Froch to the world on April 25, enabling the 31-year-old from Nottingham to discard the veil of anonymity that had obscured his talent for so long. Even in Britain, his seven-year career had provoked only indifference until this defining moment. In the pantheon of outstanding performances by British boxers overseas, this was up there with Lloyd Honeyghan's improbable stoppage of Don Curry in 1986, John H. Stracey's defeat of Jose Napoles in 1975, Ken Buchanan's victory over Ismael Laguna in 1970, and, more recently, Joe Calzaghe's triumph over Bernard Hopkins in 2008. Shamefully, no British TV broadcaster could be persuaded to come up with a financial package to carry the bout live, so the fight was made available only on the Internet for a fee of $9.95 before ITV belatedly stepped in and agreed to show it on a delayed basis.

Froch's win was forged on his iron jaw, steely resolve, and remarkable resilience. Nobuaki Uratani and Omar Minton both had him behind by identical margins of 106-102 going into the final round and not even Jack Woodburn's eccentric scorecard—106-102 for Froch, an interpretation bordering on scandalous—could hide the fact that only a knockout would do for the Englishman.

He went about his work in those final three minutes with diamond-hard nerve and a fierce will, which, clearly, Taylor

lacks. This is not to say that Froch was brilliant in only his second appearance on American soil. There were too many flaws to support this claim, too many punches that penetrated his porous defense, and insufficient quality overall to suggest that he has the ability to beat, say, Mikkel Kessler. But no one can deny his courage or character now or the toughness and capacity to take a solid hit on the chin, which underpinned his success. Not even Taylor's people.

"He was a beast in that ring, as strong as an ox, he just kept coming and refused to lose," Lou DiBella, Taylor's promoter, said. "Carl Froch is my kind of fighter."

Not everybody was impressed, however.

"For the first eight rounds he was like a goalkeeper with no defense," said Calzaghe. "He was being outclassed and outfought by a middleweight who has seen better days. Enough is enough with Carl Froch calling me out. I will tell you categorically that I would not fight the guy even if I did come out of retirement, which I am not going to do. I am sick to death of him drumming up free publicity for himself by using my name. No one who watched the fight with Taylor can believe he is in my class. He's my stalker, nothing more.

"To be honest it would be frightening what I could do to him if we fought. He doesn't seem to realize that holding your hands up and defending yourself is a pretty vital part of boxing. I have seen absolutely nothing whatsoever from him that makes me think I should fight him and I couldn't motivate myself knowing how easily I could beat him and possibly hurt him badly. I wouldn't fight him even if I did come back. What would be the point?"

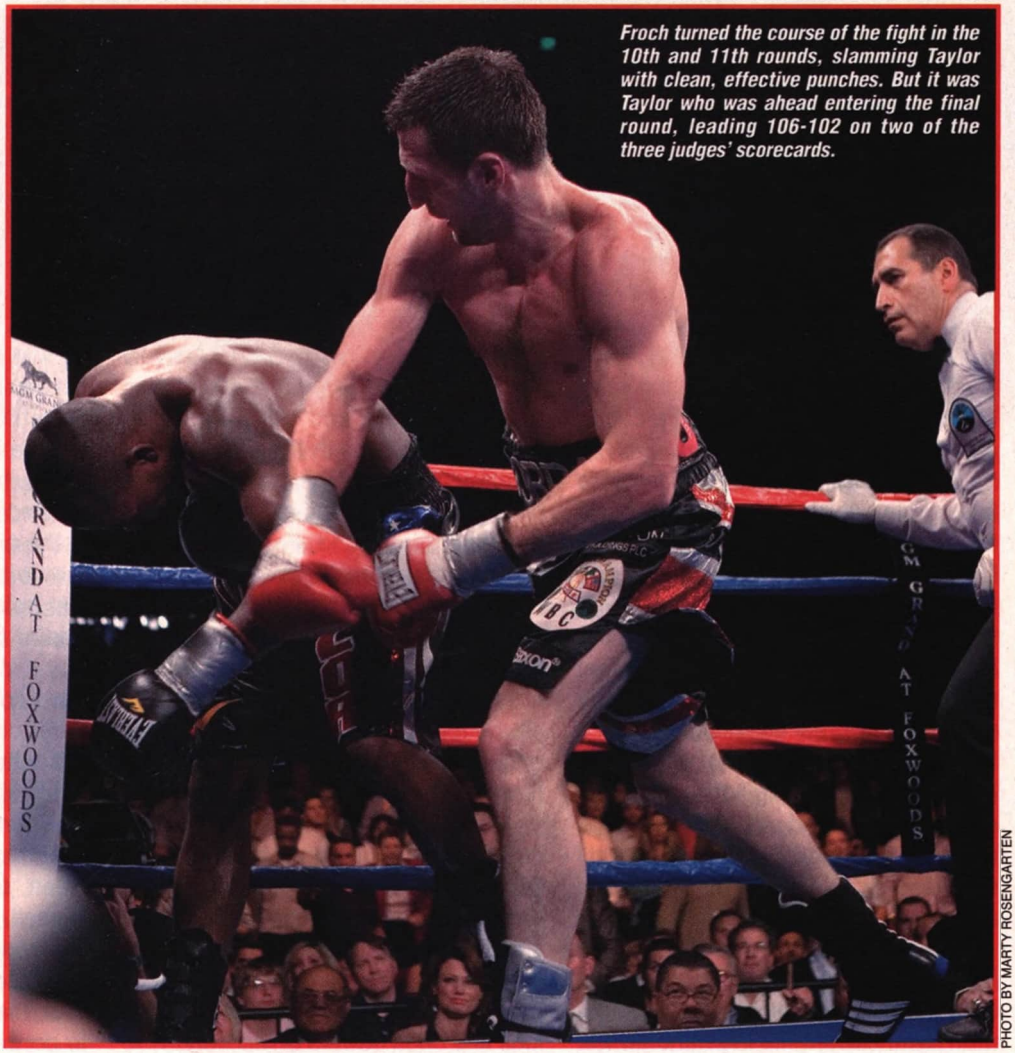
But Froch has plenty of other options with Hopkins, for one, appearing to be open to the possibility of a showdown at super middleweight as early as this summer.

"Yes, he is interested in fighting Froch and we have already spoken to his promoter, Mick Hennessy, who confirmed that he and Froch are also interested," revealed Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions. "Bernard can get down to 168 pounds and he would travel to Britain to make the fight happen, so I'm going to try to make the match."

Kessler, Lucian Bute, and the winner of the proposed encounter between RING world middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik and Arthur Abraham are also being targeted by Froch.

"I'd fight any of these guys," he declared. "I took a gamble in coming to America to fight Taylor, but I'm not 25 years old and my career needed something like this to put me up on a level where I've always believed I could be. I could have stayed in England for the next five years, making defenses against 'safe' challengers, but I am the real deal. The reason I called out Calzaghe at the end of the Taylor fight was because he said I wasn't good enough to fight him and I'm not proven at world level. Well, I gave him my answer and I showed Taylor too. If Calzaghe's staying retired, however, I'll leave him alone. He's done what he's done, he's eating plenty of food now, he's drinking and he's enjoying his life, and so he should. He's had a fantastic career and now I want to get on with mine."

Before Taylor's name entered his resume, the biggest names that Froch had fought were Robin Reid, the former WBC super middleweight titleholder, British super middleweight champion Brian Magee, and Jean Pascal, the Canadian whom he beat to win the WBC belt in another exciting duel in December 2008. He has made a good living out of boxing after winning a bronze medal



Froch turned the course of the fight in the 10th and 11th rounds, slamming Taylor with clean, effective punches. But it was Taylor who was ahead entering the final round, leading 106-102 on two of the three judges' scorecards.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

at the 2001 World Amateur Championships in Belfast, wisely investing his earnings in property while helping out in the running of his parents' pub, the New Engine House in Carlton. A keen supporter of his local football club, Nottingham Forest, he is a season ticket holder at the City Ground and a bright, articulate conversationalist.

Yet, not many people outside of his tight circle, which includes Hennessy, his promoter, and his trainer, Robert McCracken, were predicting great things for Froch when he made the journey to Mashantucket. So often have British hopes been crushed in America that even those voices supportive of Froch were bereft of real conviction. Taylor's limitations have long been known. Fading down the stretch of big fights became a recurring theme and a points victory over a shot Jeff Lacy hardly dispelled doubts that he could rediscover his finest form as a super middleweight.

Nonetheless, he was the betting favorite over Froch, and from early in the fight it looked ominous for the Englishman, who carried his left hand so low that it offered better protection for his kneecaps than it did for his jaw. Taylor, 28-3-1 (17), did not require a further invitation to unleash his right hand, and within 30 seconds of the start of the fight he was trying to connect conclusively with Froch's exposed chin. His punching was more fluid and threatening as Froch struggled with the timing of his own punches, and the first two rounds belonged clearly to the challenger.

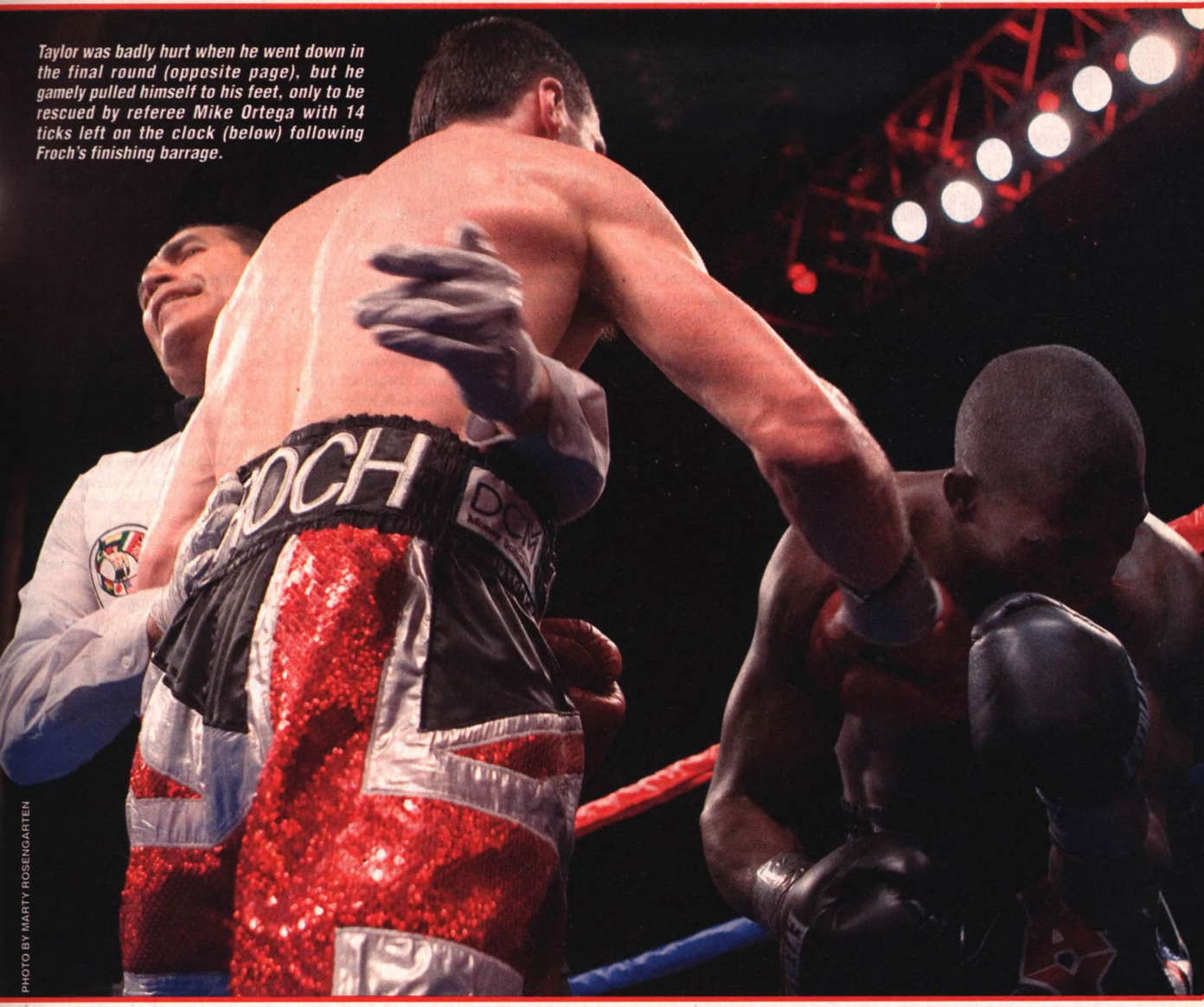
In the third round, Froch, 167, flirted with disaster. Taylor's overhand right connected flush with his jaw and, although he held the shot, he was stunned badly. Taylor, 166, pressed home his advantage with a left-right on the ropes and the second right was enough to put Froch on the floor for the first time in his life as an amateur or pro.

"I looked up at the referee as he counted and I didn't know how I'd got on the floor, so Taylor must have hurt me," Froch would acknowledge later. "The hill sprints I do in training, eight or nine at a time up hills with a one in four gradient, these saved me because I have strong legs and good powers of recovery."

He needed all of these powers to see out the round, though Taylor missed an opportunity by restraining himself from jumping in to try to finish the job. Perhaps he felt that because he was in total control he just needed to keep chipping away and Froch would crumble. But the underdog proved that he is made of the right stuff and, finally, he gained a foothold in rounds six and seven. He was also in charge in the eighth round until Taylor caught him with a series of hard punches just before the bell, which rocked him again. One of these, a left uppercut that exploded off his jaw, would surely have floored a lesser man, but Froch, determinedly, stayed on his feet and did better in the ninth round before the battle shifted decisively.

Rounds 10 and 11 were good rounds for Froch. Taylor was throwing fewer clean, crisp punches and taking more himself. Still, as Taylor came out for the final round, the fight was in his hands.

Miscommunication in his corner, however, made him unaware that all he had to do was survive the round to win his



Taylor was badly hurt when he went down in the final round (opposite page), but he gamely pulled himself to his feet, only to be rescued by referee Mike Ortega with 14 ticks left on the clock (below) following Froch's finishing barrage.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

second title. He believed that he needed to close the fight big in order to seal his victory. Froch, 25-0 (20), was resolved to go all-out himself, and he hurt Taylor with a right hand just a minute into the round. Remaining composed, he overcame his own tiredness to maintain a steady assault, culminating in two right hands to the jaw that sent the American crashing to the canvas in a heap.

Referee Mike Ortega's count was slow, and Taylor got back to his feet at "nine," but he was in such a diminished state that the bout could have been ended then and there. Instead, Froch was allowed to land several more combinations and one final right hand before Ortega waved it over at 2:46 of the 12th, a climax that evoked memories of Julio Cesar Chavez' victory over Meldrick Taylor in 1990 and even Jake LaMotta's stoppage of Laurent Dauthuille in 1950 in which only two seconds and 13 seconds remained, respectively.

"Although this was a great win for me, it came at the end of a sub-par performance, and coming to America for a fight of this magnitude did catch me in the headlights, psychologically," Froch reflected. "During the day, I was apprehensive and I could feel my heart pounding because it was sinking in with me just how big a deal this fight was. If I hadn't had the recognition before, I knew this fight would give me that and those thoughts were flooding in on me all day.

"Thankfully, I was able to sense Jermain weakening in the last couple of rounds. I also knew that time was running out, but when I finally got through to him, I had to keep calm and not rush the finish, even though the clock was ticking. I got a lot of things wrong, I knew I was behind on points, and I knew I was dangerously close to losing my title. But I held on to my belief that the strongest man would prevail, and the warrior within came through to save me."

It is this warrior spirit that, in spite of his limitations, would make him impossible to dismiss against Kessler, Bute, or anyone else in the super middleweight division. Froch is one of the best in his field, as Taylor and a whole new audience knows now. ■

Brian Doogan, THE RING's European correspondent, was ringside at Foxwoods for the Froch-Taylor fight.

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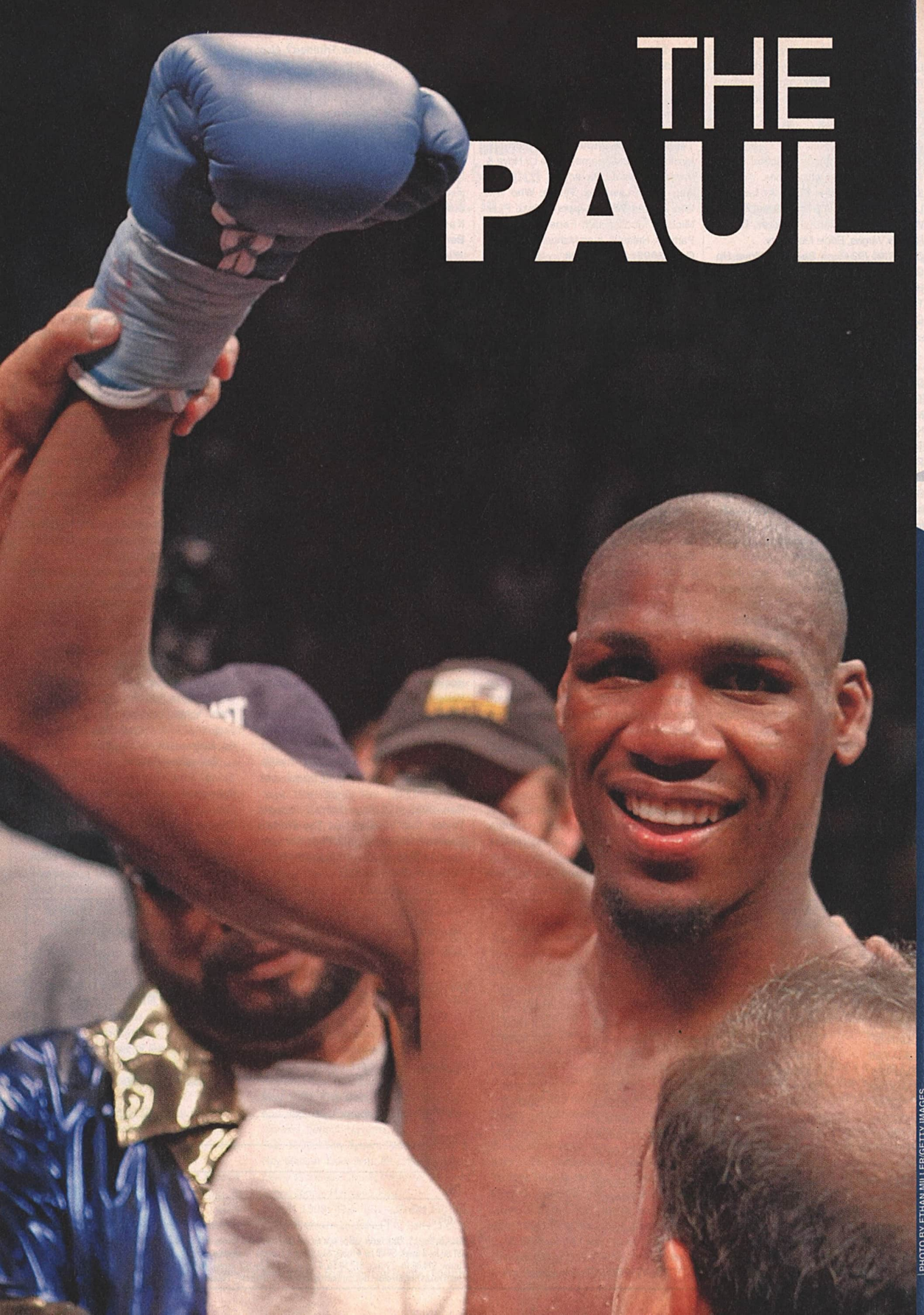

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THE PAUL WILLIAMS PARADOX

The Good, The Not-So-Good, And The Man Nobody Wants To Fight

By Don Stradley

Imagine a young fighter—we'll call him Fighter A—a fighter pegged by some as a man of destiny. His physical dimensions are such that he will either end up in Canastota or the Museum of Natural History, for he is a 6'1" sometime welterweight with arms longer than those of most heavyweights. But not only is he a case of nature run amuck, he throws such a high volume of punches that he can nearly drown an opponent with his activity level. The stories around him are extraordinary, with tales of promoters fleeing in terror rather than match one of their own fighters with

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

In his most recent bout, Williams gave former junior middleweight champion Winky Wright perhaps the most one-sided beating of his career. But Wright is 37 years old and had not fought since Bernard Hopkins beat him in July 2007, which might have been the reason the fight did not attract many patrons.

him. Elite fighters from welterweight to middleweight supposedly shudder at the thought of him.

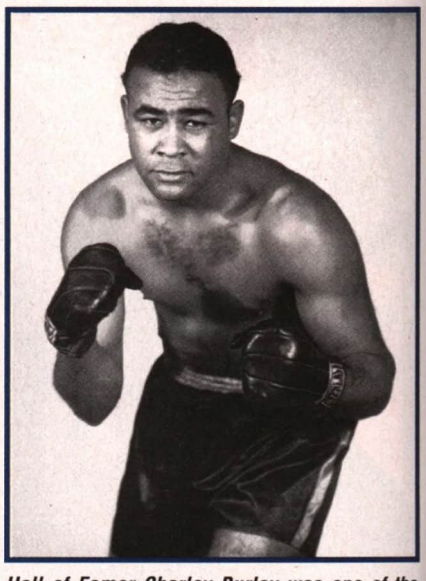
Now, imagine another young fighter—we'll call him Fighter B. In his first title bout, he fades down the stretch but wins a disputed decision. In his next fight he is out-hustled and loses the title. He wins the rematch by knockout, then he tries a new weight class. He scores a TKO over an aging veteran, but doesn't look impressive. Then he faces a 37-year-old who hasn't fought in nearly two years. Fighter B wins easily, but less than 5,500 people are in attendance, and the venue is not exactly crackling with electricity.

Fighter A and Fighter B happen to be the same guy, Paul Williams, a fighter who exists between two plains—that which he has achieved versus that which he might achieve. Williams' supporters have a knack for ignoring Williams' off-nights and looking ahead to future glories. That is, when they're not complaining that he's not getting the big fights. You see, he is this year's "most avoided fighter." Williams' camp makes it sound like a truly desperate situation.

We wonder if Williams ever heard of Charley Burley.

The debate between those who believe Paul Williams is a superstar in the making and those who remain skeptical came to a momentary halt last April 11 at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. That was the night Williams handily outpointed Winky Wright over 12 rounds, giving the sort of performance that usually is pointed to as a defining moment, the fight where the critics stop being negative and say, okay, let's get his autograph on a boxing glove and go home.

The next day's reviews included the by now familiar hosannas to Wil-



Hall of Famer Charley Burley was one of the greatest fighters of all-time, but never got a title shot. Williams has already won a couple of alphabet straps, but has yet to challenge for a true world championship. It's unlikely, however, that "The Punisher" will suffer the same fate as Burley.

liams' outlandish height and reach, and Wright's inability to handle Williams' hailstorm of punches. There was also the occasional self-congratulating comment like "Those who truly appreciate the Sweat Science know that Williams is a godsend," for it's not enough that his supporters write odes to him, they must condemn those who've yet to sign up.

The writers under Williams' spell aren't alone; fans who clustered in Internet chat rooms after his Las Vegas victory theorized their man would not only reign supreme from 147 to 175, but would in his spare time visit Wales to kick Joe Calzaghe's retired bottom, and then climb into a time machine to smash Tony Zale.

To a degree, the enthusiasm was understandable. No one has dominated Wright, 159, the way Williams did. Wright's armor-like gloves and elbows offered little protection against Williams, 157, who by the end of the bout had thrown 1,086 punches, 247 of which left Wright looking puffy, scraped, and beaten. Judges Adalaide Byrd, Robert Hoyle, and Jerry Roth saw the bout for Williams, 120-108, 119-109, and 119-109, respectively.

Notorious sore loser Wright even showed up at the postfight press conference to give Williams his due. "He threw a lot of punches, and they come from so long a distance it's hard to even counter," said Wright, 51-5-1 (25).

The win brought Williams' record to 37-1 (27). This was not the prime time, impossible-to-hit Winky, but Williams' loyalists would argue that no other fighter could produce a near shutout against Wright, even in 2009. They might be correct.

Still, the skeptics bring up other bouts, namely the 2007 bout with Antonio Margarito, where Williams sputtered in the late rounds, the loss to Carlos Quintana, and the less than brilliant performance against Verno Phillips. If you're a cup half-empty type, then those

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Even though Williams tallied a quick knockout in the rematch, critics still recall the boxing lesson Carlos Quintana gave him in February 2008 en route to winning a 12-round decision. Fair or not, when a fighters is hyped as heavily as Williams, every misstep is magnified.

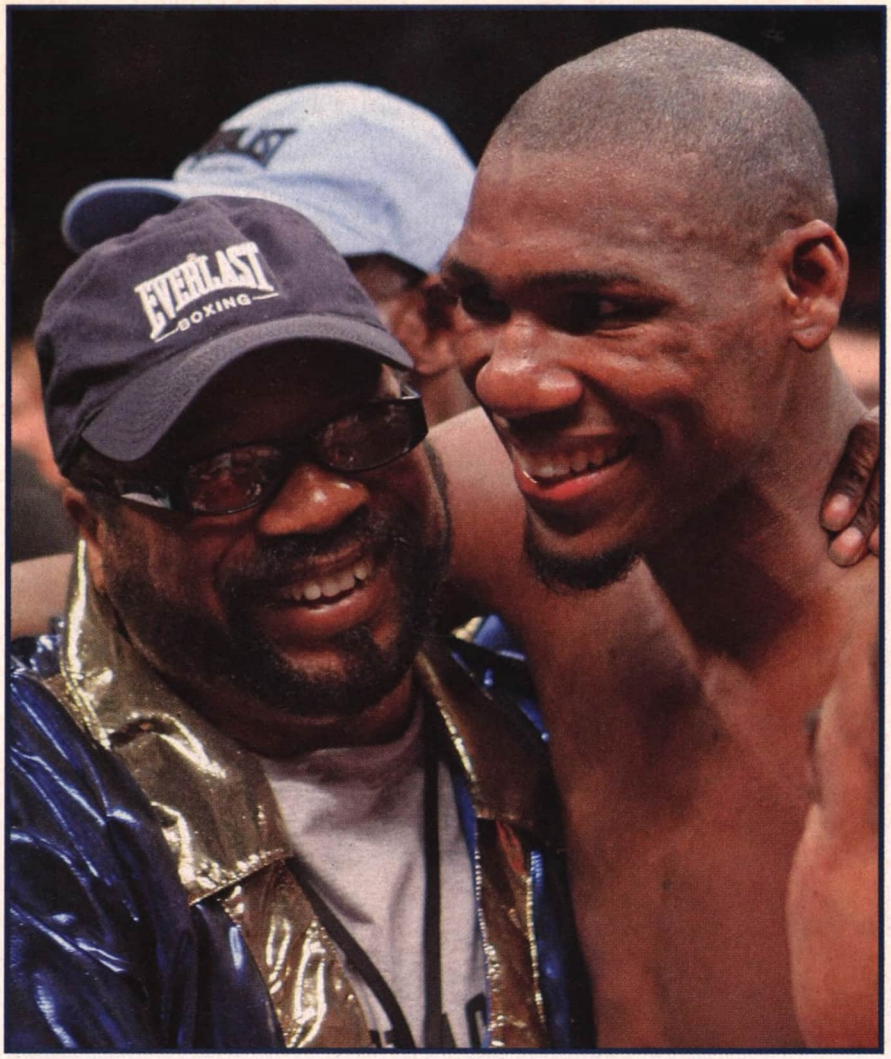


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Trainer George Peterson and Williams celebrate the victory over Wright. Peterson has stated he believes Williams is going to be just as great as Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, Ray Leonard, and Roberto Duran, which is setting the bar incredibly high, even for a fighter as gifted as Williams.

bouts are probably enough to keep you from buying into Williams. But if you're a cup half-full sort, you may see these bouts as character builders. Margarito and Phillips, after all, are tough veterans. As for Quintana, Williams more than evened things up in the rematch by dusting him in a single round. Williams' trainer, George Peterson, thinks the world has no choice but to recognize Williams' gargantuan talents.

"Paul will exceed the fame of Sugar Ray Leonard, or Marvin Hagler, or Tommy Hearns, or Roberto Duran," Peterson told *The Augusta Chronicle*. Peterson also claimed that he held Williams back from knocking Wright cold, for fear that such a result would scare off future opponents.

So much has been written about Williams being this year's "most avoided man in the sport" that those words should be sewn onto the back of Williams' robe. But maybe Goossen-Tutor, the promoters behind Williams, are expecting too much. They keep asking: Why won't anyone fight him? But why should anyone fight Williams? He doesn't have anything anyone wants, no title, no marquee value, no nada. Even if you beat him, as Quintana did, it doesn't mean much. It certainly didn't make Quintana a star.

Veteran trainer and former fighter Harold "Shadow" Knight believes the people behind the scenes are at fault.

"Here's a fighter with tremendous ability and the wingspan of a jet, and no one knows who he is," Knight told THE RING. "His promoters need to get Paul's face in every magazine and billboard, take out ad space, anything. Saying no one wants to fight him is just an excuse; they aren't promoting him right."

Williams' low-key personality may be hurting him too.

"He's a respectful young man from down south," said Knight. "He needs to talk it up a little, make people want to see him. But I don't know if he has it in him. That's why his promoter needs to get to work."

ShoBox analyst Steve Farhood admires Williams, but told THE RING, "I don't consider Williams the next big thing; I think he's already among the most elite fighters in the world. Whether he can transcend boxing is another story. At this point, I don't see him separating himself from the pack in terms of developing or cultivating an out-of-the-ring image. And if you're going to become a superstar, that's a must."

It's difficult to predict Williams' immediate future. The Wright bout should've paved the way for something, but Dan Goossen sounds as if Williams' career is still stuck in a holding pattern.

"We think Paul would still be devastating at 147, but all the welterweights want to fight Manny Pacquiao," said Goossen. "Can you imagine Paul fighting Pacquiao? It's ridiculous.

"We wanted Shane [Mosley], but this is the first time in Shane's career where he hasn't wanted to fight someone. I respect him for being honest and admitting it."

Middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik nearly fought Williams last year, but opted for a more lucrative bout with Bernard Hopkins. A bout with Pavlik would at least show us if Williams has a middleweight chin. But according to Goossen, Pavlik's promoter, Bob Arum, recently gave him another emphatic "No."

Williams is ranked number two by THE RING at junior middleweight, and a bout with number-one ranked Vernon Forrest might crown a champion recognized by THE RING, but strangely, there is talk of Williams meeting WBO titlist Sergio Dzindziruk, which would bring Williams neither money nor prestige. Maybe alphabet-brand loyalty has something to do with it, since Williams once wore the WBO welterweight belt. Former light heavyweight champion Glen Johnson is also being considered for Williams.

We asked if it might behoove Williams to stop hopping around in different weight classes and just plant himself somewhere. He's only 27, so why couldn't he take a year or two to become the dominant force at, say, junior middleweight?

"It's not bad thinking," said Goossen, "but for various reasons it can't happen. There's been a growing tendency over the past 15 years for managers and promoters to be overprotective of fighters, to the point where they'd rather leave money on the table than take a chance. Paul would be happy to clean out a division, but there's nothing to clean out."

Goossen was asked if he's ever been on the other side of the coin, preventing one of his fighters from fighting a tough opponent.

"I've been in situations where I knew the odds were against us, but I've always had the philosophy, and so did our fighters, of no risk, no reward," said Goossen.

ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* commentator Teddy Atlas told THE RING, "If no one wants to fight Williams, I'd put him in with some more ham-and-eggers. Showcase this kid who has natural gifts, this great height and reach, with the busy hands, and people would become curious, and want to see him take more risks. Then there would be demand for a real fight. But I also worry about him—he might get too cute against these ham-and-eggers. He could end up losing again."

Atlas also downplayed Williams by saying, "He's not a monster; he's just difficult. He's not sensational. He's hot and cold. Maybe he's matured since losing to Quintana, but he's not great.

"All the talk about him fighting in five weight classes and winning titles, it sounds good, but the days of Roy Jones hand-picking easy opponents and making all that money on HBO are over. This is now an event-driven business, and Williams needs to be built into an event fighter. That's hard to do and it's becoming harder. There are only one or two event-type fights per year. Every one else is competing for a much smaller piece of the landscape," said Atlas.

If Goossen could snap his fingers and make a fight happen, it would feature Williams vs. Hopkins. "Paul would be fighting someone his own size, and I think he'd be the fighter to give Bernard his first kayo loss. We've spoken to Golden Boy Promotions, and it's being discussed. Bernard beat another young whippersnapper last year, Kelly Pavlik, so maybe he'd like to try it again.

"If nothing can happen at the lighter weights, we'll just have to 'Supersize' Paul Williams, like they do with a McDonald's meal."

In the meantime, Williams shouldn't feel too badly about his predicament. Maybe he's not landing the big bouts, but he's not being ducked the way Archie Moore, Hagler, Mike McCallum, and even Hopkins and Wright were ducked. Then there's Charley Burley. He had a record of 83-12-2 (50), but never came close to a title shot. He died broke and alone in Pittsburgh, where he'd worked as a garbage collector. He probably couldn't even afford to live in one of the buildings Williams owns. But those qualified to speak of such things said he was just about the best they'd ever seen. Being ducked by Sugar Shane Mosley is one thing—Burley was ducked by Sugar Ray Robinson.

Williams is a long way from Charley Burley. He's earned a few million bucks, he has a small but devoted fan base, and maybe soon a date with Hopkins. And his reach is long enough to keep even the skeptics at bay. ■

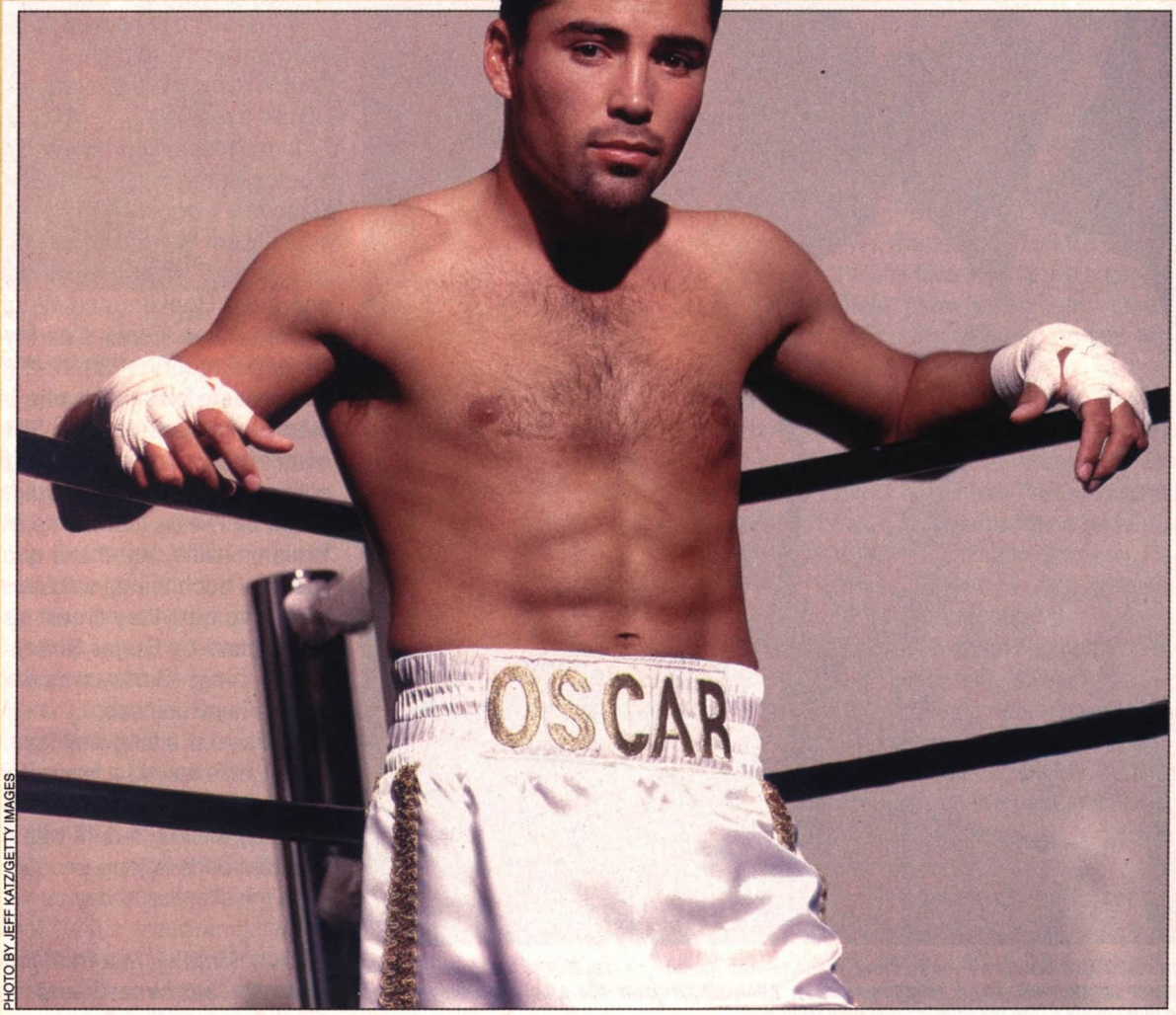
PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

It is promoter Dan Goossen's job to move Williams into the sort of superfights that will raise his profile and purse level, but it hasn't been easy. Although Williams has a cult following among boxing fans, many of the top names want no part of him.

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

THE GOLDEN YEARS *Revisited*

Oscar De La Hoya's Professional Boxing Career, Through The Eyes Of THE RING



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With each successive generation, attention spans get shorter and shorter, and, consequently, long-term memories become a rare commodity. Revisionist history tends to take over for actual history. We don't remember all of the details of a man's life; we remember a few high points and a few low points, all seen through the tinted lenses of how we viewed him toward the end.

After Oscar De La Hoya announced his retirement from boxing on April 14 at an outdoor plaza across the street from Staples Center in his native Los Angeles, the eulogies for his career correctly focused on his remarkable impact on the business of boxing, but weren't necessarily accurate on other details. There was a tendency to recall him as a fighter who ducked no one, but who lost all of his biggest fights. Both assessments were at best half-true. Over the second half of De La Hoya's career, that was generally how it went: take on all comers, lose to many of them. But early in his career, the picture was precisely the opposite: "The Golden Boy" was frequently accused of ducking his most dangerous opposition, and for the first seven years and 31 bouts on his resume, he never lost.

One way to combat the lure of revisionist history is to recall what was written at the time. In the moment, there were no fuzzy memories of how Oscar fought and what he represented. There were diverse opinions, of course, but they were all based upon what people had seen with their own eyes just hours earlier—not what their brains told them they saw a decade before.

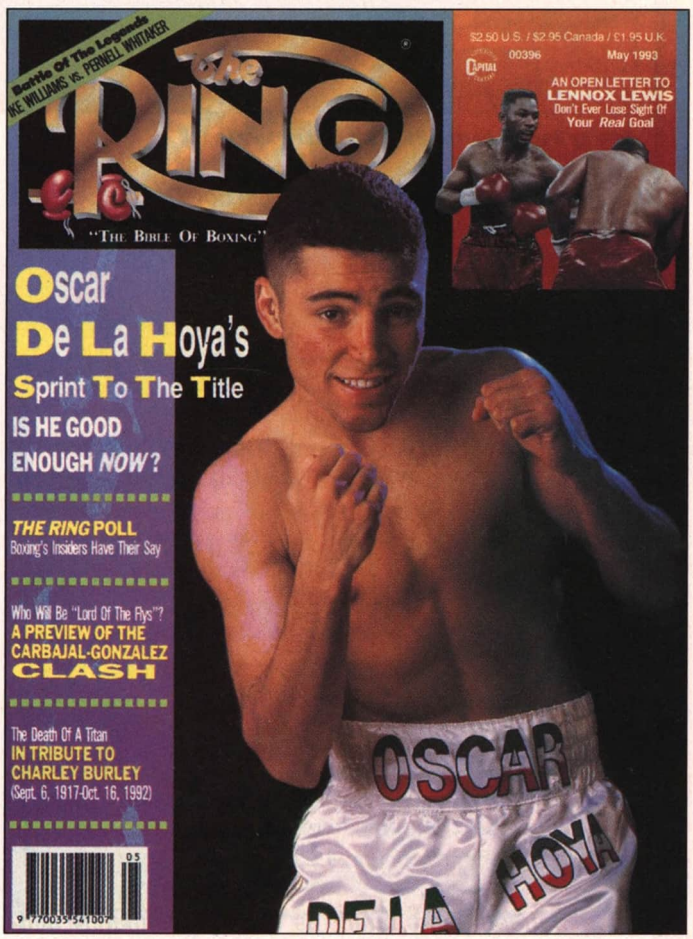
What follows is a career retrospective built from the words of THE RING writers. (A handful of these clips are from sister magazines such as *KO* or *World Boxing*, but the great majority come from the pages of "The Bible Of Boxing.") They tell the tales of De La Hoya's greatest triumphs and most heartbreaking defeats, and they tell them without revision. These passages serve as a tribute to the talents of some of the finest boxing journalists of the last 16 years, but more significantly, they serve as a tribute to a remarkable Hall of Fame boxing career.

De La Hoya's first RING cover story came in the May 1993 issue, when he was a veteran of just three pro fights. In his feature entitled "Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough Now*?", Robert Cassidy wrote about the complicated task of maneuvering an Olympic gold medalist with massive potential and massive hype:*

Oscar De La Hoya's money is already in the bank. The down payment on his new home has been paid. The first million-dollar six-round fighter in boxing history is financially secure. Now comes the tricky part: His managers must see to it that their golden boy delivers the pot of gold that his vast boxing potential has seemed to promise.

To some, banking on potential is a crapshoot. To others, it's a calculated risk. In this case of Steve Nelson and Robert Mittleman, De La Hoya's co-managers, the development of their fighter's potential could end in a tremendous windfall or a trip to bankruptcy court. They were willing to take the risk. Or was it a gamble? Consider this: Nelson and Mittleman won't make a profit until *after* De La Hoya wins a world title *and* makes a few successful defenses. Now *that's* risky business.

From the start of De La Hoya's career, boxing writers and fans have struggled to pinpoint just how much his image and the real person behind it intersect. In the April 1994 issue of THE RING, after De La Hoya had separated from his original managers, Steve



De La Hoya garnered his first RING cover after only three pro fights

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/GETTY IMAGES

Beating Bredahl earned Oscar his first alphabet strap

Farhood pondered this in "Golden Boy Or Golddigger? The Damaged Image Of Oscar De La Hoya":

Until a couple of months ago, the name Oscar De La Hoya brought a single snapshot to mind. There's Oscar the Amateur, victorious again, dropping to one knee and sending a kiss to the sky, for his mother Cecilia, who died of cancer in 1990. It is a warm picture, full of love and tenderness and all the emotions that were long ago banned from boxing. It is all so ... *human.*

As 1993 wound down, however, a second snapshot developed quickly, like a 60-second Polaroid print. There's Oscar the Professional, in a room by himself, counting $100 bills that sit neatly in a suitcase. He counts for a long time, all the way past one million, and never grows tired of his task. It is a cold picture, full of avarice and materialism and all the emotions that we regularly associate with boxing. It is all *too* human.

Where the first snapshot is as real as De La Hoya's feelings, the second picture is more of a composite or an artist's rendition. But perception can become reality, and in the minds of many, "The Golden Boy" has become tarnished by gold.

Fifteen years later, the boxing community still debates the validity of De La Hoya's claim to being a six-division, 10-time "world champion." In the August '94 issue of KO, *Farhood was already addressing the issue in his "International Report" column after De La Hoya claimed his first belt, the WBO 130-pound title:*

Boxing has become so damn complicated. There was a time when a hot prospect would fight for the world title and either establish himself as a future great or fall on his face. Sugar Ray Robinson beat Tommy Bell and instantly became The Man. Cassius Clay stopped Sonny Liston, and there was no other big guy who really mattered. Mike Tyson crushed Trevor Berbick, and the heavyweight picture was suddenly in perfect focus.

So what are we to make of Oscar?

Boxing's future made his big-fight debut at the grand reopening of the Grand Olympic Auditorium—or did he? De La Hoya dethroned WBO junior lightweight champion Jimmi Bredahl, which is like winning the U.S. Open by outbirdeying the club pro.

As Oscar advanced from super-prospect to bona fide superstar with his spectacular 1995 campaign, there were a slew of articles wondering if his success was a mirage created by careful matchmaking. In the March '96 issue of Boxing '96, *Ron Borges joined the legion of critics in his "Ringside News & Views" column:*

The Golden Boy has developed a unique battle plan. He wins a 130-pound title and defends it against 122-pound opponents. He wins a 135-pound title and defends it against 130-pound opponents. Now he's talking about moving up to win the 140-pound title, but, one assumes, only if the champion agrees to go on a diet. Is this how Sugar Ray Leonard became Sugar Ray Leonard?

While fans were curious in the mid-'90s to see how far De La Hoya would go as a fighter, many were equally curious to understand him as a person. To that end, for the June '96 issue of THE RING, Ivan Goldman wrote a piece entitled "A Day In The Life Of A Superstar: THE RING Visits Oscar De La Hoya," and here's the impression he came away with:

De La Hoya is viewed by many critics as aloof, a kind of royal dignitary who needs some kind of leveling, preferably in the prize ring. The truth is, he is a regular guy who does not stand on ceremony and is quite decent to the people around him. But De La Hoya maintains his dignity, and he's not likely to get himself a "Born To Lose" tattoo to prove he's no snob.

De La Hoya's first true superfight came in 1996, when he faced his aging idol, Julio Cesar Chavez. In the October '96 RING, Farhood wrote about what beating a bloody Chavez meant to De La Hoya's popularity in the article "Timing Is Everything ... And Oscar's Timing Is Perfect!":

As for De La Hoya's popularity in Mexico, and with U.S.-based Mexican Nationals, his chop job of Chavez probably didn't help. Despite a ring demeanor that is much more Pipino Cuevas than Maromero Paez, he is perceived by the Mexican fans as being too much style and not enough blood. Or, to put it another way, Cuevas never broke camp to play *golf*.

Some of the shine began to come off with De La Hoya's first controversial decision win, against Pernell Whitaker in '97. In his "Ryan Out Loud" column in the August '97 issue of THE RING, Jeff Ryan spoke for the fans in more than 700,000 households who'd ordered the pay-per-view:

Pernell Whitaker and Oscar De La Hoya seemed to be having fun at various points in their superfight in Las Vegas. The Golden Boy would smile that Rembrandt toothpaste smile, and "Sweet Pea" would counter with a wiggle of his posterior. Whitaker would talk some trash, and De La Hoya would score and raise his arms over his head on his way back to the corner. Glad they were having a good time, because the rest of us sure as heck weren't.

By 1997, one of the key plotlines in De La Hoya's career was his revolving door of trainers. He had recently fired defensive specialist Jesus Rivero and replaced him with Emanuel Steward when William Dettloff wrote "Watch Out, Macho Man! Oscar's Back On The Power Play" in the November '97 issue of THE RING:

It would seem remarkable that Rivero lasted with De La Hoya as long as he did. What was a trainer drenched in the subtleties of defense doing with one of the best pure punchers on the planet? This is tantamount to leaving the tuning of one's Ferrari in the hands of an expert Volkswagen mechanic. It doesn't matter if he's the best in the world at tuning Volkswagens. When you've got a monster under the hood, you want to use that power, not see how many miles you can get to the gallon.

Before De La Hoya turned pro, there was semi-serious talk about him challenging Genaro Hernandez

PHOTO BY BRENT COOK

THE RING's Ivan Goldman (center) spends a day with De La Hoya and trainer Robert Alcazar

PHOTO BY JASON LAVIN

Whitaker and De La Hoya had more fun than the fans

THE RING goes to bat for De La Hoya

in his very first fight; not surprisingly, Oscar was held to a ridiculously high standard throughout his career when it came to quality of opposition. In the January '98 RING, Goldman had some fun with this in his cover story, "Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone!":

At some point Oscar De La Hoya, boxing's own Rodney Dangerfield, has got to start asking, "What's a guy have to do to get some respect around here?"

If in his next three outings he polished off Godzilla, Rodan, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon, De La Hoya, along with the rest of us, would no doubt hear a parade of fight experts explain that the lagoon creature was a blown-up super lightweight, Rodan hadn't fought anybody in a while, and as for Godzilla, that cut over his eye was actually inflicted a month before the fight when Godzilla Junior playfully tossed a Mitsubishi full of squirming passengers at Daddy.

From a competitive standpoint, De La Hoya's 1998 fight with Patrick Charpentier accomplished nothing. But the marketing of the fight and the crowd of more than 45,000 in El Paso, Texas, made it a memorable scene. Nigel Collins addressed De La Hoya's unprecedented appeal in his story "Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring," in the October '98 issue of THE RING:

The notion of boxer as teen idol will undoubtedly rankle some purists, but even the most conservative of fans have to love the way De La Hoya turns into an elegant assassin when the bell rings. And if thousands of women screaming his name during fights is the price we have to pay to watch this unique fighter test his talent against the best of the rest, so be it. Because if one thing rang true in El Paso, it was that De La Hoya is the immediate future of boxing, a guy who can not only carry the sport on his back, but maybe even take it places it has never been before.

Unlike the Charpentier fight, De La Hoya's 1999 battle with Ike Quartey forced him to dig deep, as Collins explained in his "Ringside" editorial in the June '99 RING:

Sure, Oscar's a pretty boy, but that didn't stop him

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Females of all ages went wild for Oscar in El Paso

from picking himself up off the canvas in the sixth round or battling through a badly swollen eye. So what if he moved out of the barrio and now lives in a ritzy neighborhood befitting his tax bracket? That didn't stop him from letting it all hang out in the 12th round.

So even if you loathe Oscar from the top of his designer haircut to the bottom of his low-cut boxing boots, don't let the image fool you. This guy is a helluva fighter, and the Quartey bout was the latest and, to date most emphatic, confirmation of that fact.

Only a few months after his riveting win over Quartey, De La Hoya had the boxing world changing its tune with his first defeat, against Felix Trinidad. In the January 2000 KO, *Collins' "My Best Shot" editorial served as an example of how opinions can sway with*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Many consider De La Hoya's 2002 knockout of Vargas his greatest victory

one disastrous performance:

Although they are frequently the victims of boxing's many injustices, this time I place the blame squarely on the shoulders of the fighters. True, De La Hoya, with his safety-first attitude, was the main culprit, but Trinidad didn't exactly throw caution to the wind. Even when De La Hoya tired down the stretch, "Tito" never went for broke. The sad truth is that neither of them totally committed themselves to the moment, even though it was the most important fight of their careers.

What makes the whole affair particularly galling is that we've all seen countless boxers fight their hearts out for a couple of hundred bucks. In the words of one irate fan who called *KO* to complain: "One guy was scared, and the other guy was glad that he was."

After a 31-0 start to his career, De La Hoya lost for the second time in three fights when he slugged it out with Shane Mosley in L.A. As Oscar prepared to launch a comeback with an easy win over Arturo Gatti, Goldman explored what losing meant to De La Hoya in his "Digging Deep" column in the May '01 RING:

When I interviewed him after his first victory over Julio Cesar Chavez, De La Hoya referred repeatedly to his undefeated record. Retiring as an undefeated champion—keeping that goose egg on his record—was vital to him.

De La Hoya lost a piece of his soul when he got jobbed against Felix Trinidad. Perhaps worse, he saw those tapes of himself running for the last 3½ rounds.

In his fight against Mosley, De La Hoya never took a step back. But the clever Mosley used De La Hoya's phenomenal courage against him, inviting him into traps and making him pay for being there.

De La Hoya doesn't fear his opponents. He fears losing to his opponents, which is not the same thing. In proper doses, fear can keep fighters from getting careless. But when they're wrapped in the fear of losing, it's difficult for them to fight their best fight.

Underneath the carefully managed exterior, who is the real Oscar? And are De La Hoya fans and boxing fans two separate groups of people? These are questions that followed De La Hoya around his entire career, questions explored by Johnnie Whitehead in the November '01 issue of THE RING. Whitehead wrote "Oscar De La Hoya: Is Star Power The Only Power He Has Left?" following Oscar's win over Javier Castillejo:

Here's the problem: De La Hoya carries the reputation of a phony who is about as genuine as one of his marriage proposals, and many are turned off by his image-conscious approach. There were several indications during the Castillejo fight that his core fan base—young, loyal, and female—treat his bouts more

like a concert than a fight. They lack the same passion that beloved Mexican warriors such as Marco Antonio Barrera or Erik Morales generate. Barrera and Morales do it by punching the opponent in the mouth. De La Hoya does it by merely taking off his robe. True, his fans' money spends the same, but the way he's going, De La Hoya may never waltz back into the hearts of true-grit fight fans. And the teenyboppers' loyalty could easily fade with another loss, or the minute Father Time works his evil magic on his dainty visage.

Against Fernando Vargas in 2002, De La Hoya scored arguably the most satisfying victory of his career—as well as the last superfight victory he would ever score. In the January '03 RING, Eric Raskin reflected on the fight in "The Golden Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar's Prime Just Beginning?":

In the months leading up to "Bad Blood," Fernando Vargas repeatedly posed two questions about Oscar De La Hoya: Is The Golden Boy a *real* 154-pounder, one who can deal with a strong, career-long junior middleweight like himself? And, is De La Hoya a *real* Mexican, one who can do the nation's warrior heritage proud when confronted with an opponent who would rather be dead than be un-Mexican?

Whether or not he's a great fighter, Vargas is definitely a great interrogator, and he always gets answers out of his opponents. But to paraphrase that overused but nonetheless appropriate Jack Nicholson line, Vargas wanted answers, but he couldn't handle the truth. That's because the truth is De La Hoya is as real and as strong at 154 as he was in every other

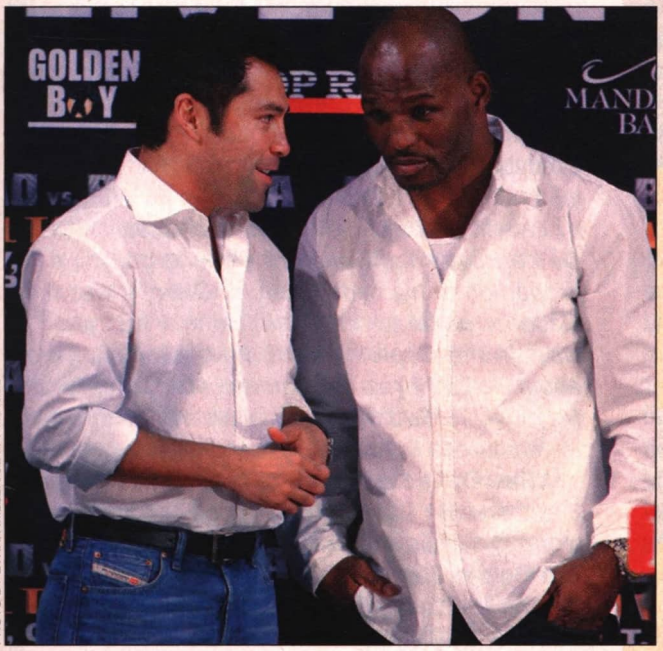


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Former rivals De La Hoya and Hopkins now work together

THE FIGHT FRATERNITY ON OSCAR

Here's a collection of memorable quotes from fighters and other boxing insiders about De La Hoya, taken from the pages of THE RING and its sister magazines:

"We boxed three or four rounds a day for about a week. The first few days, he had an edge. That's when all the talk started. The newspapers said he manhandled me. What a joke! As soon as I started to get in shape, he quit boxing with me."

—Genaro Hernandez, on his famous 1992 sparring sessions with De La Hoya

"My plan was to destroy his stomach. But he destroyed my face first."

—Jimmi Bredahl, after losing to De La Hoya in '94

"The dream fight for the biggest money of all-time is Oscar and [Dana] Rosenblatt. That's what I think about when I go to sleep at night."

—Bob Arum, after De La Hoya beat Rafael Ruelas, making a prediction that didn't quite come true

"I've dealt with a lot of athletes, and I've yet to see his ego. He doesn't have a pompous way about him. He's real. That's because he remembers where he came from."

—Dena duBoef, De La Hoya's publicist, being a good publicist

"He's essentially cut out the tongues of all of his critics, especially in the Mexican and Mexican-American communities. Or he's added them to his fan base. In a sense, he's as big or bigger than ever. We've seen him mature from a boy to a young man and go through the kind of difficulties that all good fighters go through, and come out standing."

—Larry Merchant, after De La Hoya defeated Yory Boy Campas in '03

"What Oscar is doing right is that he started getting his feet wet with small local shows, off television, associated himself with good people, and then used his popularity to get a series on HBO. I think Oscar's company will continue to be around, because it was very intelligent of him to start at the grassroots level."

—Lou DiBella, on the relatively young Golden Boy Promotions in '03

"Oscar has always been known for how handsome he is. I'm envious of him. His nose is straight. You can't go out like that."

—Bernard Hopkins, prior to fighting De La Hoya

"Oscar has the biggest balls of any man I've ever known. This is really a big gamble for him. But he loves a challenge."

—Emanuel Steward, prior to De La Hoya's fight with Floyd Mayweather

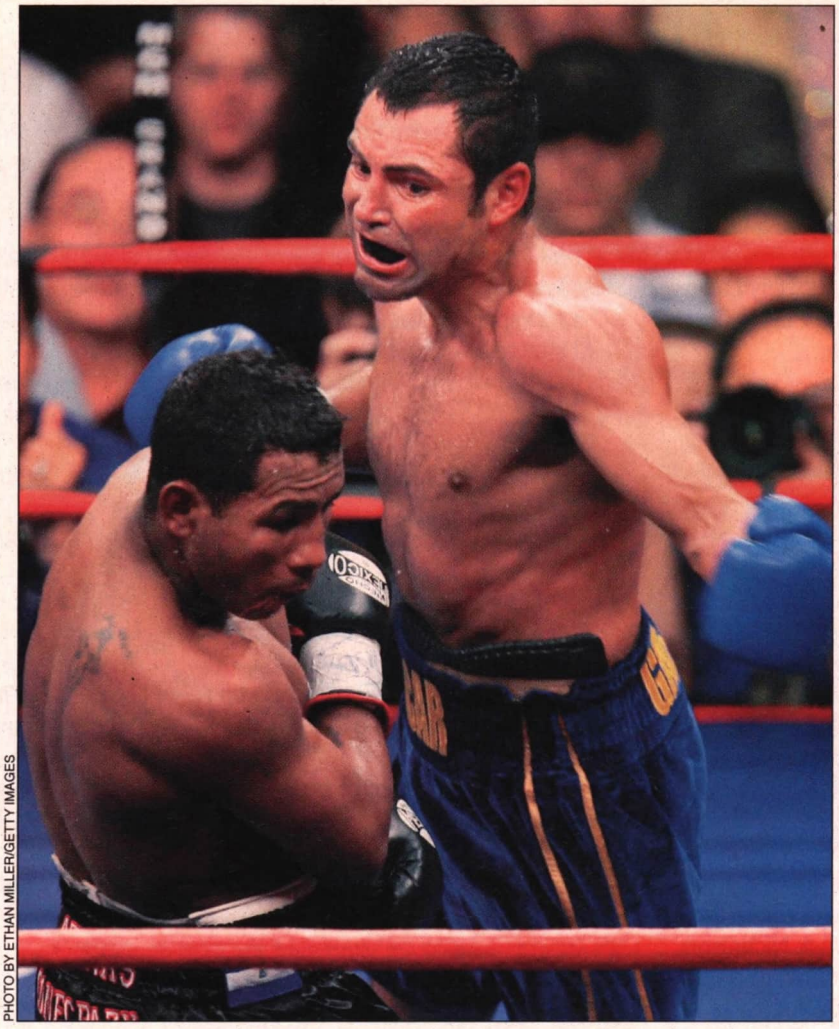


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

"The Golden Boy" attacks Mayorga en route to final career kayo

division he's ruled, and, more important, he's every bit as "Mexican" in the ring as Vargas.

In the aftermath of his controversial 2003 rematch loss to Mosley, Ryan offered analysis of what the fight meant in the big picture of Oscar's career in his "Ryan Out Loud" column in the February '04 issue of THE RING*:*

De La Hoya was supposed to be the Latino Leonard, but hasn't yet delivered. He's been brilliant when the big-fight opponent has cooperated, but surprisingly unable to adapt on several occasions when things have gone wrong. And so it's another big fight and another medium performance to go with it.

You know, the most unsettling thing for those of us who followed De La Hoya even before he won the gold in Barcelona in 1992 isn't that he didn't deliver a career-defining performance in Las Vegas on September 13, but that maybe he did.

Ironically, after De La Hoya's next defeat, a stoppage at the hands of Bernard Hopkins, Ryan had a decidedly more positive take. He praised De La Hoya's bravery in the February '05 edition of "Ryan Out Loud":

In many cases, the guy moving up isn't meeting the best fighter in the higher weight class. So in essence, his real challenge is more the new weight class than it is his opponent. (Think Roy Jones vs. John Ruiz.) That wasn't the case with De La Hoya. He went after not just the undisputed middleweight champion, but also the pound-for-pound king and a first-ballot Hall of Famer. It's what Ray Robinson, Ray Leonard, or Tommy Hearns would have done. That's no small compliment.

If De La Hoya motored around the ring in the late stages of decision "defeat" to Felix Trinidad five years to the day before the Hopkins showdown, it only figured that The Golden Boy would be on his toes more than the Joffrey Ballet against the stronger, rougher, harder-hitting (at least at middleweight) Hopkins. At the very least, De La Hoya could be expected to avoid standing in front of Hopkins the way the crowd at the Great American Baked Bean Eating Contest avoids standing downwind from the competitors. But to the surprise of everyone, most of all Hopkins, De La Hoya hung right in the trenches and tried to force the issue, even after Hopkins' offensive bursts began finding their target. It earned De La Hoya the first three rounds on my card and, more importantly, "The Executioner's" respect.

Late in his career, the volume of questions about De La Hoya's motivation for fighting grew in equal proportion to his bank account. Often, it was up to Oscar to prove to the world just how motivated he was. In the September '06 RING*, Goldman wrote about De La Hoya's final knockout win, over Ricardo Mayorga, in "Gold Standard! Oscar's Brilliant Return A Matchmaker's Dream":*

When De La Hoya at last re-entered the ring on May 6 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas and knocked his taunting, vicious opponent halfway back to Nicaragua, The Golden Boy shocked the world into remembering who he really is and what he does best. Hammering quick, deadly shots into Mayorga's head and trunk, Oscar, without saying a word, reminded everyone that,

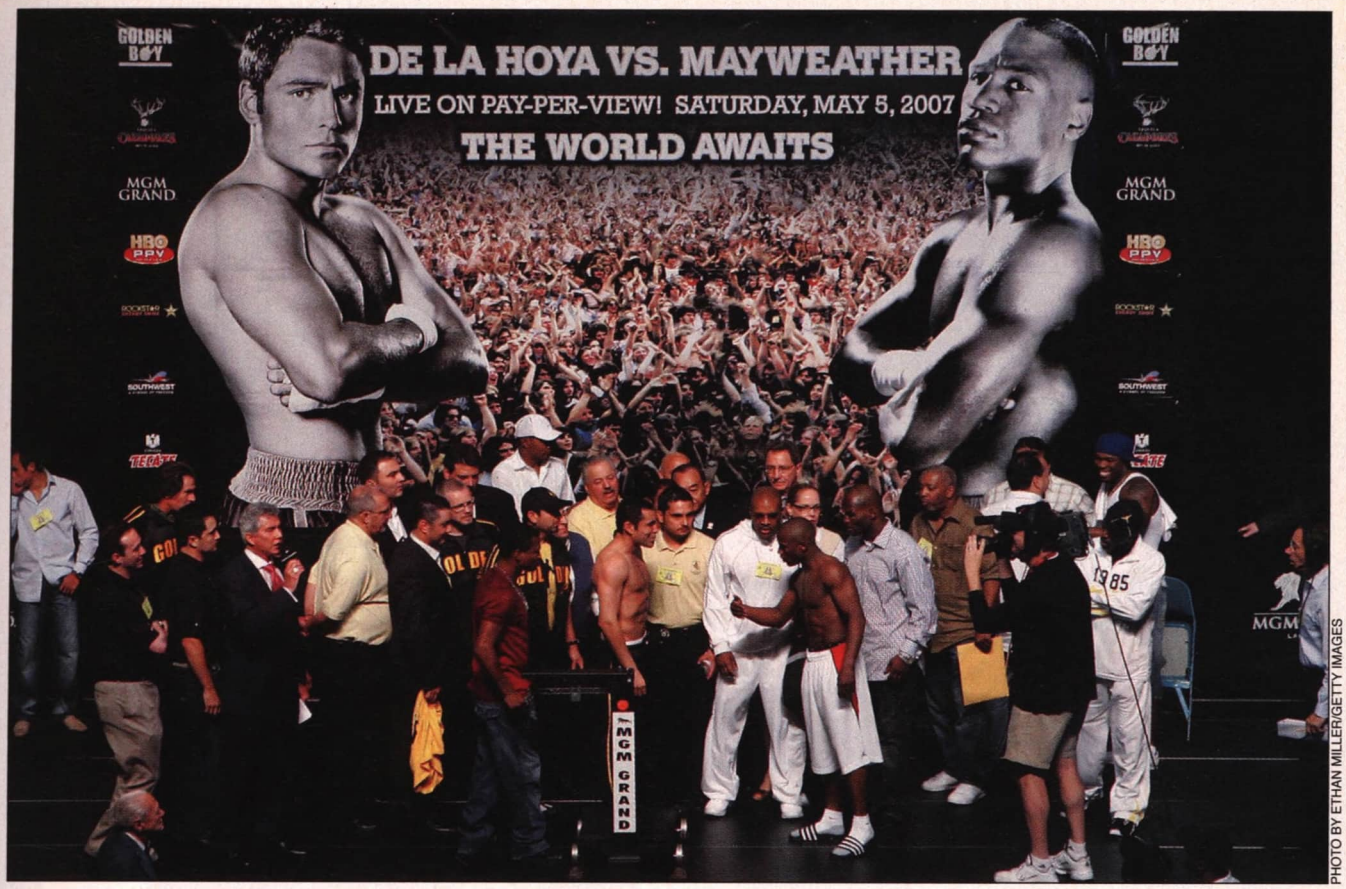


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

De La Hoya and Mayweather smashed all existing box-office and pay-per-view records

yes, he may be a *People* magazine celebrity, but before he appeared in beer and deodorant ads, rode around in limousines, or dabbled in high-priced real estate, he was a poor kid from East L.A. who fought like the devil. De La Hoya didn't get where he is by fighting boring fights, and his ring rust never made town.

It would be impossible to reflect on De La Hoya's career without including the highest-grossing fight of all-time, his narrow decision loss to Floyd Mayweather. Collins gave perspective on the degree to which the fight delivered on its hype in "Mayweather-De La Hoya: Questions Answered ... Questions Raised" in the August '07 issue of THE RING*:*

Going in, it seemed likely that the Mayweather-De La Hoya fight would be overshadowed by the hype or swallowed up by the event, but the quality of the struggle and the level of the athletes involved combined to produce a fight respectable enough to appease, if not enthrall.

Equally important, it was a fight unencumbered by controversy, bad behavior on the part of participants or patrons, and untainted by scandal. For a change, boxing held the high ground, especially in the wake of an NBA All-Star Game weekend featuring far more disorderly conduct than even a hedonistic playpen like Las Vegas was willing to overlook.

In 2008, De La Hoya announced plans for a three-fight farewell tour. Those plans were altered by Mayweather's temporary retirement and by Oscar's humbling defeat to Manny Pacquiao, but 2008 did still mark his final year as a prizefighter. The final word goes to Collins, who, in the September '08 issue, wrote about the realities of De La Hoya's impending retirement in "Going Home to Find The Magic ... But Can Oscar Conjure Up A Win Over Mayweather?":

First and foremost, De La Hoya is a fighter who knows his time is running out. One day in the not-too-distant future, he will have his final fight—and then everything will change. He will no longer be Oscar De La Hoya, the fighter. He'll be Oscar De La Hoya, the millionaire who used to box.

On one level, that's a rare and wonderful thing, but the problem is that you don't stop being a fighter when you stop fighting, and that, as many of Oscar's predecessors have discovered, can be extremely unsettling. The best you can hope for is to be secure in the knowledge that you did the very best you could with what you had, when you still had it.

If De La Hoya felt that way, he would have quit already. That is what the farewell tour is really all about—his last chance to be the best he can be. ■

PHOTO BY STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHTING OSCAR

What It's Like To Be The Guy In The Other Corner

By David Mayo

A scant month after Luciano Pavarotti opened the Mandalay Bay Events Center in 1999, Oscar De La Hoya and Oba Carr struck a different chord with the arena's first major boxing event, though neither knew the precise significance of the moment. De La Hoya, victorious via late technical knockout, would leave the prize

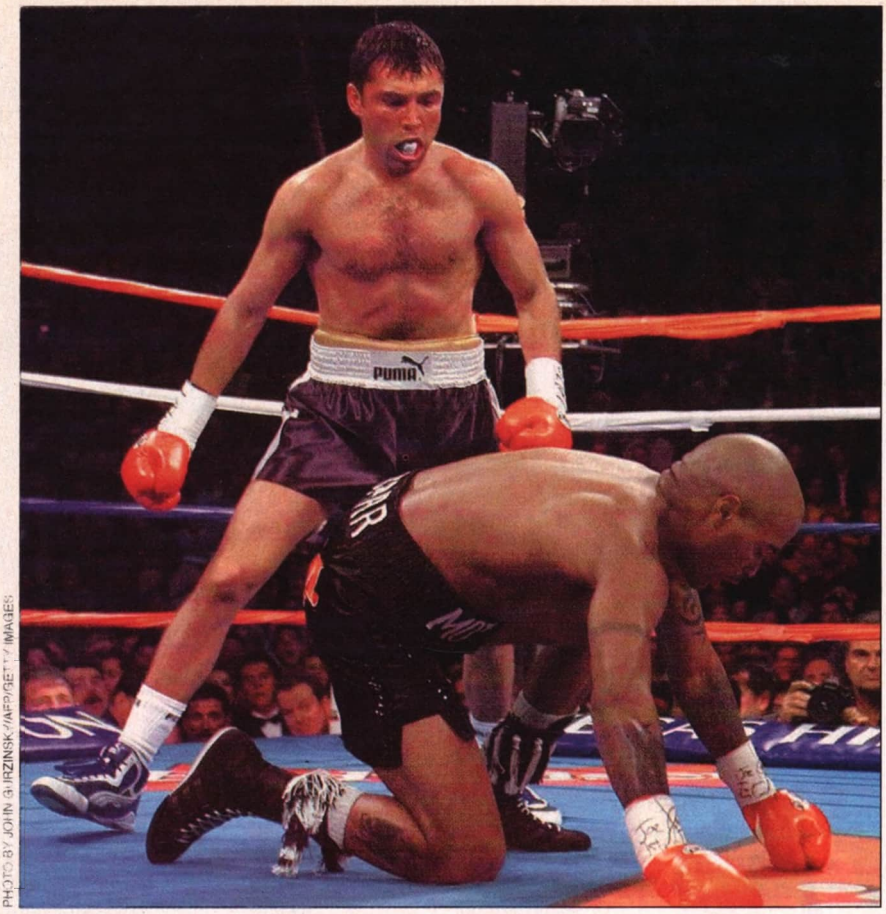


PHOTO BY JOHN GARZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

De La Hoya knocks down Oba Carr en route to an 11th-round knockout in May 1999. Carr did reasonably well in the early rounds but admits he ran out of gas and couldn't keep pace with "The Golden Boy" in the later rounds.

ring undefeated for the last time that night, with a loss against Felix Trinidad to follow. And Carr, a loser in previous welterweight title bids against Trinidad and Ike Quartey, struck out that night and never challenged for another major championship.

Carr professed to have had a premonition about beating De La Hoya. After a left hook seated him in the 11th round, prompting Richard Steele to stop the dazed challenger, Carr insisted his favorable presage had not been misguided.

"The vision was right," he said, "it was just misinterpreted by the ref."

A decade later, Carr still has his misgivings about that night, though now they are mostly internalized, particularly his regret about lacking stamina to withstand De La Hoya's assault, which he attributes to his own training habits.

Yet, like so many opponents of the recently retired "Golden Boy," the one thing Carr said he always would treasure is the opportunity he was extended.

"I was a good technician, had a lot of ring experience," Carr said. "When I got in there, I was able to figure Oscar out pretty good. But after the fifth round, I ran out of gas a little bit and wasn't able to initiate the attack like I wanted to. So it was a bad night for me. But I'm glad I got the fight. I view the opportunity as a life-making experience.

"It was a big crowd—a lot of people from Las Vegas and a lot of people from Hollywood. So it was good for me. It got my name out there. Pretty much everyone knew Oscar De La Hoya at the time I fought him, so everyone who knew of him knew of me. It would've altered my life a great deal more if I had won, but I made a name for myself with that fight. I just wish I'd been in a little bit better condition. Maybe things would've turned out different."

De La Hoya, right up until he announced his retirement, remained something of a fistic enigma. He often was credited with broader marketing appeal to women than men, and to Anglos rather than Latinos. Defeat seemed to have little impact,

PHOTO BY ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

According to Jeff Mayweather, he knew he didn't have much of a chance of beating De La Hoya when they fought in March 1993, because of some previous sparring sessions and the fact he lacked the punching power to kayo his famous opponent.

if any, upon that appeal. His outward chaste was tempered by an undeniable sex appeal and backroom tales about womanizing.

And for most of his opponents—both those he vanquished and those who were his conquerors—the opportunity to touch that bankable greatness seems almost as important as the outcomes.

Bernard Hopkins, Shane Mosley, and Manny Pacquiao handed De La Hoya four of his six losses, yet the first two became his close friends and business partners in Golden Boy Promotions, and the latter told him "You're still my hero" after an alarmingly lopsided career finale.

Floyd Mayweather, who two years ago decisioned De La Hoya in the richest fight in history, maintains an overt bitterness to the man he chased for nearly a decade. When the fight finally was made, an 11-city press tour proved unique in De La Hoya's career for all the strange shenanigans. During one tour stop, in Washington, D.C., Mayweather overheard De La Hoya order a special meal of chicken, broccoli, and fruit, spied the waiter until he saw the plate emerge, then left the dais and intercepted the meal for his own consumption. They spent 10 days in nose-to-nose confrontation, until De La Hoya became admittedly sickened by Mayweather's rants. The hype added heft to a new HBO creation to market the fight, a four-part preview series dubbed *De La Hoya-Mayweather 24/7*.

Despite all that ongoing disdain, Mayweather, in announcing his comeback this summer, openly suggested—and perhaps hopes—that De La Hoya would mirror his own aborted retirement path and return for a rematch.

"I'll be honest, I don't really like Oscar," Mayweather said, "but we do great business together."

From the Sun Bowl to Madison Square Garden, from the Alamodome to Staples Center, De La Hoya for 16 years delighted deliriously cooing women as much as the dates they dragged to his fights. With a few notable exceptions such as Mayweather and Pernell Whitaker—the latter of whom steadfastly refuses to acknowledge De La Hoya's controversial 1997 decision victory and has said he paid no attention to his rival's career after the loss that effectively ended his 13-year dominance in three weight divisions—De La Hoya's opponents harbor little lingering malice.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Floyd Mayweather claims he dislikes De La Hoya but would love for Oscar to come out of retirement for a rematch. Floyd's dislike probably stems from his jealously when Top Rank promoted both fighters.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Frenchman Patrick Charpentier lasted less than three rounds against De La Hoya in June 1998, but the more than 45,000 fans at El Paso's Sun Bowl were delighted with the outcome nonetheless.

Certainly, Mayweather's uncle doesn't.

Jeff Mayweather was De La Hoya's fifth professional opponent. They fought on the Humberto Gonzalez-Michael Carbajal I card in 1993 at the Las Vegas Hilton, De La Hoya's first pro

PHOTO BY ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

De La Hoya's first-round TKO of Troy Dorsey proved physically punishing for both men. Dorsey suffered a huge cut that required plastic surgery and Oscar incurred a hand injury that caused him a lot of grief throughout the rest of his career.

appearance in boxing's fight capital. Jeff Mayweather shares none of the ill will about De La Hoya that his nephew does, even if the light-punching lightweight knew he had little chance at victory after sparring with De La Hoya a couple of months earlier.

"It's one of those feelings you get, that any fighter knows, that realistically the only way you can win is if the other fighter gets counted out," he said. "It's a horrible situation, especially when you know you don't have what it takes to win. Oscar knew I couldn't hurt him. At that point in Oscar's career no one was going to beat him unless they knocked him out anyway. I didn't have the tools necessary to win in that situation, because I was never able to punch."

De La Hoya often was criticized for being a one-handed fighter, though the foundation for that ominous left hand—that he is a natural left-hander who was turned around by his first amateur trainer—remained a secret to many of his early opponents.

Mike Grable learned De La Hoya is naturally left-handed by watching him sign the fight contract.

"We didn't know all that back in 1993," Grable said. "Not to take anything away from his cross, but that was a lot of power up front, especially at 135 pounds."

Of De La Hoya's first 16 pro opponents, only Grable lasted the distance, in an eight-rounder at Rochester, New York.

"I went into that fight more relaxed than any other fight I ever had because everyone thought I was going to get the hell beat out of me to start with," Grable said. "The worst thing I could do was fulfill everyone's expectations."

The first former titleholder De La Hoya fought was Troy Dorsey, also in 1993. Dorsey, a former kickboxing champion who briefly held the IBF featherweight title, regarded the bout on the Tommy Morrison-George Foreman undercard as "a great opportunity against the gold medalist, the 'Golden Boy,' to take a big step in my quest to become a world champion again."

"I was excited about fighting him and it was a great steppingstone for him," Dorsey said. "I'm sure that's how he looked at me, as a steppingstone, because I'd already won a world title. It was a great opportunity for me and I always appreciated it, even if I wasn't able to test him for long."

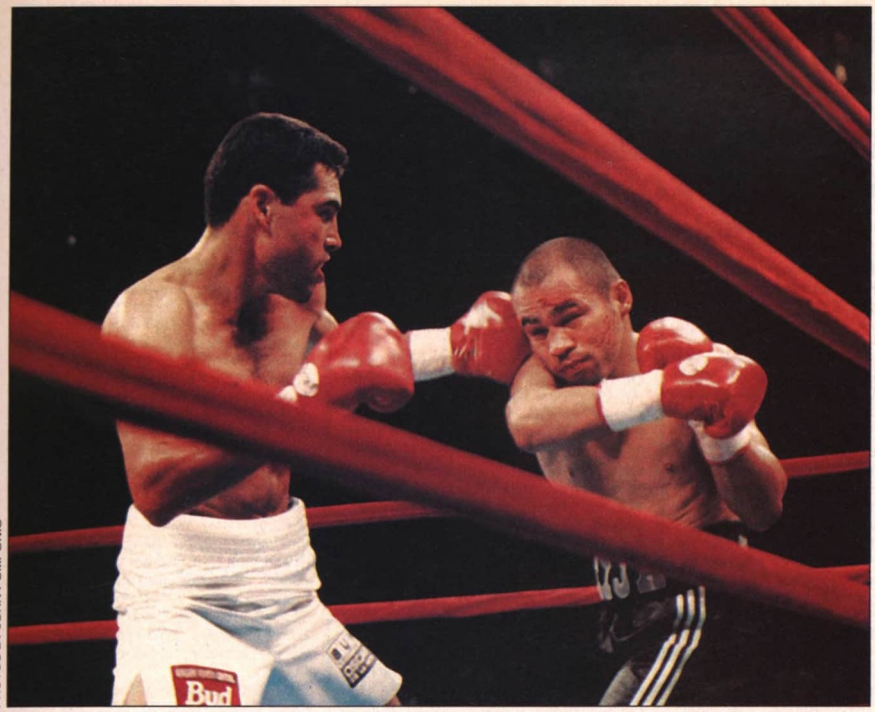
The examination lasted one round, long enough for De La Hoya to bust open Dorsey's left eyebrow with a left hook. Dorsey recalled being dismayed with the quick stoppage: "At first, I thought they stopped it because of who he was," he said—until he returned to the dressing room and saw the deep, two-inch gash over his eye, which the oft-cut fighter called the worst of his career.

The fight's ending proved injurious to both men. Dorsey required both plastic surgery to close the cut and another operation to repair a detached retina. De La Hoya cited that punch for a ligament injury in his left hand that forced him to change punching angles for the remainder of his career to avoid shooting pains.

"I hadn't heard that before," Dorsey said. "But that's what he gets. I guess I showed him. That was my plan, to hurt his hand with my eye."

Dorsey said he would like to know what would have happened if he had time to work the taller fighter's body over a period of rounds.

"But I have to be honest about something because my conscience is pulling at me to give him credit," he said. "I remember when he was



PHOTOS BY JOHN POMPONIO

James Leija had only lost once in 33 pro fights when he fought De La Hoya in December 1995 at Madison Square Garden, but just couldn't withstand his adversary's punching power (above) and was counted out by referee Ron Lipton in the second round (below).

punching at me, slipping some of those punches, and I could just tell he was a really hard puncher. He was even a hard puncher at the heavier weights. But he was *really* a hard puncher at the lighter weights."

That position was confirmed by another Texan, Jesse James Leija, who lost on a second-round stoppage in De La Hoya's first of two career fights at Madison Square Garden and his last lightweight bout.

"He was on his way up but not at the top yet," said Leija, a former 130-pound titleholder who already owned wins over Azumah Nelson and Louie Espinoza when he fought De La Hoya in 1995. "I thought I had a great chance. I looked at the guys Oscar had fought and the guys he had beat and I said, 'Okay, I'm better than these guys.' But getting in the ring with him was incredibly different. He was a different animal, man. We call these guys freaks of nature, guys like Oscar, who was thin and tall and still hit that hard. I was sparring 147-pounders when I was getting ready for Oscar, guys with great records, and I was doing well with them. My confidence was great going in there. But I went in there and he was a different animal, man, a different animal.

"He was so much taller than me, at 5'10", and making that certain weight, at 135. I think it all came down to power at the end. I fought Espinoza, who was a great puncher, and I was able to take his punches. I fought Azumah Nelson and was able to take his punches, and Azumah was a great puncher at the time. But Oscar, it was just a different thing. People don't understand the power he had. People say when you go up in weight you don't take your power with you. Oscar was knocking guys out at 140, 147, 154. So can you imagine how strong he was at 135? That's what I had to deal with."

Leija became friendly with De La Hoya as the years passed, sometimes dining or golfing with him—and, on the occasion of his retirement, crediting him for transforming the sport.

"I always tell people he's the Elvis Presley of boxing because no matter where he goes, he has people around him who want to see him and touch him," Leija said. "He did a lot for our sport. He brought the sport of boxing to women, to white-collar America. He opened the door for fighters to make more money. He legitimized the sport, more so than it ever had been before. Fighters like him come along every 20 years or so and raise the sport. What Tiger Woods did for golf, he did for boxing.

"He had the great fighting ability, he had the looks, and he had the great management. He had it all and he took advantage of it. And this is the perfect time for him to walk away from the game." ■

David Mayo is a freelance writer from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a regular contributor to THE RING.

BACK ISSUES OF KO

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Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

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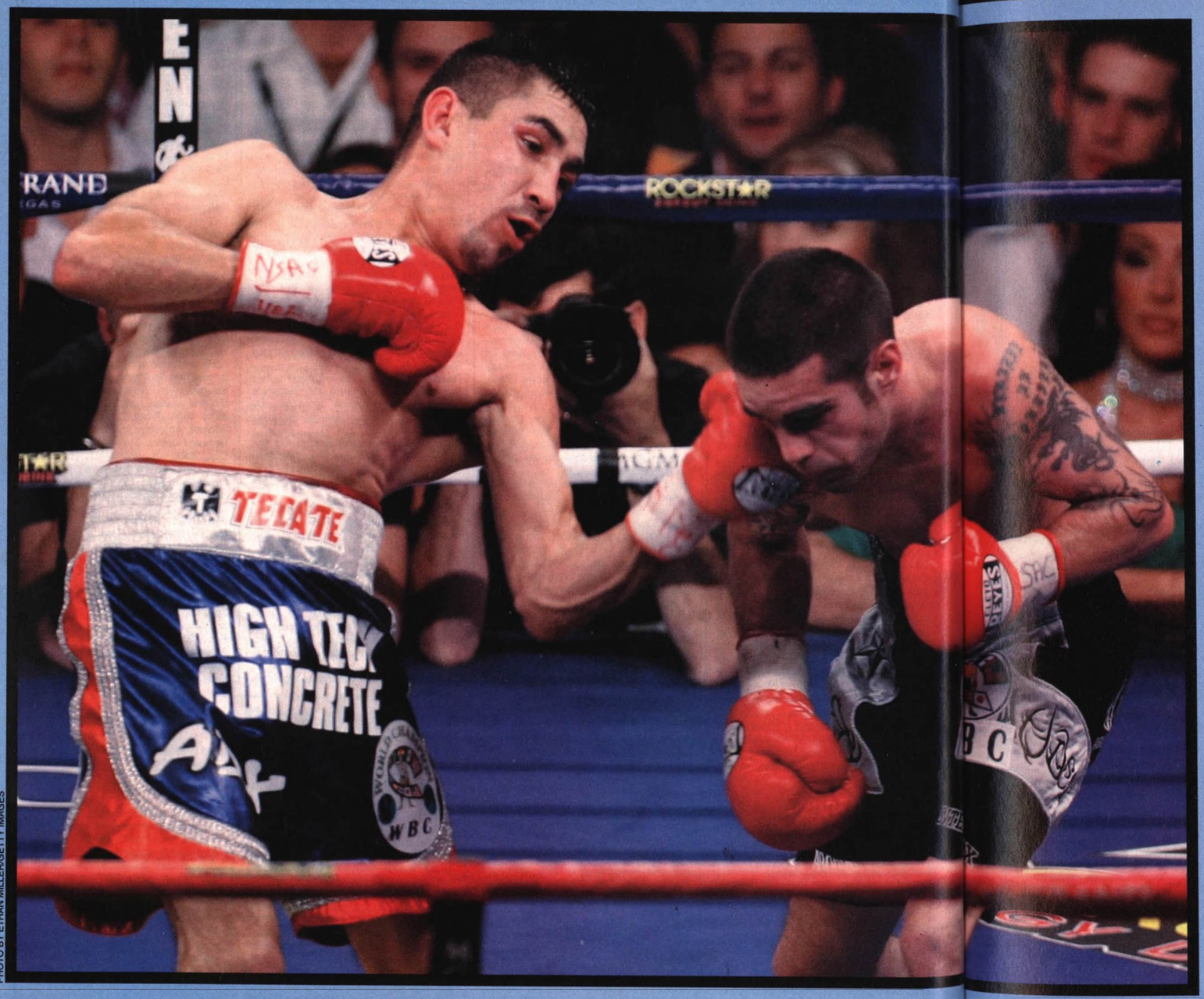


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Soto tags Canadian challenger Benoit Gaudet with a left uppercut en route to a ninth-round knockout in defense of his junior lightweight alphabet belt. The fight was the chief preliminary on the Manny Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton pay-per-view.

12 Years And Waiting

DOES HUMBERTO SOTO HAVE THE FLASH TO MAKE THE CASH?

By William Dettloff

There is little that is flashy about Humberto Soto, THE RING's top-rated junior lightweight and holder of the WBC 130-pound title. His torso is not covered in ink, he doesn't have a sparkly, undefeated record, a world-famous trainer with Parkinson's, or the kind of human-interest story that is easily translatable to the masses.

Soto is not a one-punch knockout artist or a heroic bleeder or a sensation in Venezuela or Japan. No history of brain bleeds or valiant fights against paternalistic government agencies, no one Tweeting on his behalf that he is the next Oscar De La Hoya. No *24/7*. No *Ring Life*. He doesn't speak English, he does not carry the hopes of a nation on his shoulders or the expectations inherent in being the son of a famous fighting father.

That's what Soto isn't. But as he showed yet again on the Manny Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton card in May, Soto is a heck of a solid, well-schooled prizefighter who is as sound

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

On target: There's nothing fancy about Soto or his fighting style, but the well-schooled Mexican knows how to fight and is a dangerous puncher, as illustrated by the face-distorting right hand he landed in the Gaudet fight.

technically as any heavy-handed fighter could be who practices the type of relentless, aggressive, deliberate style he has mastered.

Don't be misled: It is not as though Benoit Gaudet, whom Soto stopped in the ninth round, was going to make anyone forget Azumah Nelson, or even Joey Gamache, a pair of admittedly disparate junior lightweights of days gone by (or super featherweights, if you're a glass-is-half-full type).

But by the time he dropped to the canvas and was rescued by referee Jay Nady, Gaudet, an astonishingly feather-fisted guy but a defensively capable one, had been thoroughly beaten up and demoralized. He thus joined a long list of Soto victims, most notably Oscar Leon, Ivan Valle, Humberto Toledo, Gamaliel Diaz, and Rocky Juarez, whom Soto upset in 2005 in what amounted to his breakout fight.

If that resume doesn't significantly impress you, don't feel you're judging too harshly. Soto himself feels similarly.

"As a champion you feel you should be making more money against bigger opponents, so at this point in time it's disappointing to not be making the big money," Soto told THE RING through Top Rank's Ricardo Jimenez, who translated. "But I know if I continue to work hard and do well, those big fights will come."

He can hope. More than once he has been mentioned as a possible opponent for Manny Pacquiao, most recently when it looked like Pacquiao's fight with Oscar De La Hoya wouldn't come off because the two sides couldn't agree to financial terms. A cynic would suspect it was never a real possibility, but rather a negotiating tactic by Top Rank. We won't tell Soto if you won't.

At any rate, a fight with Pacquiao would carry an interesting back-story of the sort that promoters love to pitch and that producers and columnists love to catch: In June 2007, Soto stopped Bobby Pacquiao, Manny's criminally under-talented brother, all things being relative. But not after Pacquiao rocked him with a left hook in the fourth round. You see where we're going: revenge of the brother and all that. And you thought only the Klitschkos were allowed.

Unfortunately for Soto, Pacquiao's win over Hatton means the Filipino icon's future dates will come against other top-

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Soto had hoped that his June 2007 kayo of Bobby Pacquiao would lure Bobby's brother, Manny, into a big-money showdown. But that never materialized, so Soto is pondering a move up to lightweight in search of more lucrative paydays.

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Soto thought he had Francisco Lorenzo right where he wanted him when this photo of their June 2008 bout was taken. But instead of racking up another victory, Soto was disqualified by referee Joe Cortez for landing a glancing blow after Lorenzo was floored. Soto avenged the bizarre loss by decisioning Loenzo in a rematch to win the vacant WBC 130-pound title.

tier fighters in superfights or against no-hopers in tune-ups. Soto isn't quite good enough for the former category, and too good for the latter. For now he has to settle for getting good exposure on Pacquiao's undercards, but he has hope for the future.

"I respect Pacquiao a lot, he's a great fighter," Soto said. "I hope to get to fight him one day."

A fight with Pacquiao or any of the other big names between 130 and 135 pounds would bring Soto a long way from his upbringing in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico, which has produced a startling number of upper-tier fighters of late. In addition to Soto, Los Mochis is the hometown of Jorge Arce and Fernando Montiel. Not bad for a town with a population of about 230,000.

"I grew up in just a little wooden house that's not there anymore, but I live not too far away from where I grew up, in the same neighborhood," he said. "When I got into boxing I figured that was my way out. Growing up we didn't have a lot of things. Sometimes we barely had enough food to eat. But I knew boxing was a way out for me and that if I worked hard I could accomplish something, and I wanted to become something."

Soto grew up with two sisters and a brother and had his first boxing match at seven years old. His grandfather, an ardent fight fan and in his younger days an amateur boxer, took young Humberto to a card of amateur fights in town.

"My grandfather and I went to see the fights, and there was this one kid nobody wanted to fight," Soto said. "And I asked my grandfather if I could go up and fight him. And he laughed and said no, he's

going to beat you up. I said I don't care, let me fight him. He let me fight him and I did get beat up, but then I said maybe I should learn how to box, and that's when I started boxing."

Soto grew up watching and admiring the great Mexican fighters for the day—Ricardo Lopez, Julio Cesar Chavez, and eventually Marco Antonio Barrera.

It was Soto's grandfather who gave him the nickname "La Zorrita," or "The Crafty Little Fox," after watching his grandson in the ring. Soto had 60 amateur fights, and claims to have won 52 of them. His grandfather died about a year ago, living long enough to see Soto win the WBC interim featherweight title and other regional titles.

"I'm very happy because I became a boxer because of him and he was very proud of all the achievements I made," Soto said. "I am happy he was able to see me win championships and be in good fights."

He was there for the bad ones too—the decision loss to Joan Guzman in 2007, the one to Kevin Kelley in '02, and to David Murillo and Hector Javier Marquez in '00, the latter for the Mexican featherweight title.

Soto does not come with an Olympic pedigree and a long list of stiffs on his record. It is a cliché to say he came up the hard way, but he did, most fighters still do after all, especially Mexican ones, and in the long run they're better fighters for having dropped a couple on the way up.

As it happens sometimes, it was a loss that gained Soto a lot of attention recently. In June '08 he was beating all hell out of overmatched Francisco Lorenzo in Las Vegas. On the verge of scoring a knockout win, he hit Lorenzo while Lorenzo was down. Though the punch

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Referee Jay Nady counts over Gaudet as Soto strolls to a neutral corner. Gaudet was down three times in all, once in the first and twice more in the ninth before Nady stopped the fight. Soto also handed Rocky Juarez his first pro defeat.

appeared to have just grazed its target, Lorenzo stayed put, and after much deliberation, Joe Cortez disqualified Soto.

When asked by THE RING why he hit Lorenzo when he was down, Soto blamed Cortez, saying they were suspicious of him to begin with and "knew" going in that if something unusual happened, it would go against them. Why? Because he's Puerto Rican, Soto said. This Mexico-Puerto Rico rivalry runs deep.

All was made right when Soto shut out Lorenzo for the vacant title six months later, and the losses haven't gotten to Soto anyway.

"I always looked at everything as a learning experience," Soto said. "You go in there and do your best. Sometimes you're fighting a guy who's supposed to beat you so you're not going to get close decisions. You're not going to get some wins that maybe you should have, but I never got discouraged by it, because I knew I would get here eventually. And now I'm here."

He didn't have to worry about getting a close decision in the Gaudet fight. Soto, 48-7-2 (31) with 1 no-contest, dropped Gaudet with a left hook in the opening round. Gaudet, 20-2 (2), made it out of the round and thereafter used good feet and reflexes to stay out of the way of Soto's heavy hands.

Over the next several rounds, Gaudet, 130, Drummondville, Quebec, stayed in business by moving and occasionally planting his feet and landing straight rights, while Soto, 130, looked for another big punch. To some he seemed perplexed by Gaudet's unorthodoxy, and when he began to give ground in about the fifth round, many thought an upset was brewing. It wasn't.

"I was thinking," said Soto, "*I'm the champion, so you're supposed to take it away from me. I'm not supposed to be chasing you around. If you want it, come and get it.*

"I wasn't frustrated. We talked in the corner that that could happen, so I just kept listening to my corner. They were telling me what I needed to do and I knew that he was one of those fighters who won't let you fight, but then he won't fight either."

Soto caught up with Gaudet finally in the ninth, catching him with another left hook that dropped him hard. A pair of right hands dropped Gaudet again, just as Nady was stumbling in to stop it. The time was 2:25.

Soto, who is married and has two small children, is eager for bigger paydays and has discussed with Top Rank the possibility of moving up to lightweight to pursue bigger fights.

"We're going to decide if we're going to stay at 130 for one more title defense or just go up to lightweight now," he said. "I think there are good fights and a chance to make more money at 135, and the name that always comes up is Juan Manuel Marquez. I don't mind defending my title [at 130]. If I go up, I'd like it to be for a title, to fight a champion."

At this writing, Marquez is busy preparing for Floyd Mayweather at a catch weight of 144, so it's safe to say Soto will not be getting a fight with him anytime soon. Why not stay at 130? There are several intriguing fights there. Who wouldn't like to see Soto against Robert Guerrero or South Africa's Malcolm Klassen?

Or how about the division's undefeated future stars, Jorge Linares or Urbano Antillon? What about Puerto Rico's Roman Martinez (as long as Cortez doesn't get the call)? Each of those are bigger, interesting, and, on paper, very competitive matches.

But then you look at 135 and there's Edwin Valero and Juan Diaz and Marquez and Joel Casamayor and Rolando Reyes. The mind reels at the possibilities.

A lot of these guys have better records than Soto (see Valero's kayo percentage), better stories (how can you top a young wife with cancer?), or better hype (some are calling Linares the next De La Hoya). All Soto has are his heavy hands, sound skills, and memories of a little wooden house in Los Mochis. We'll see how much farther they take him. ■

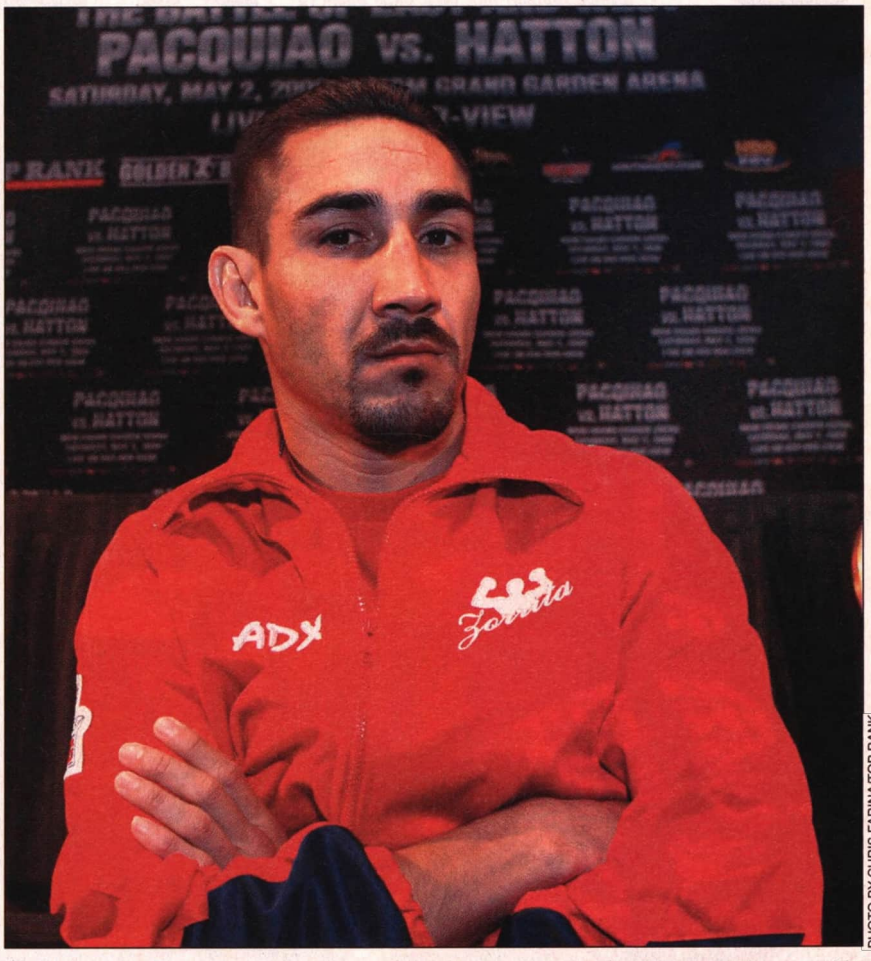


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

A stoic-looking Soto is known as "The Crafty Little Fox," a nickname his grandfather gave him during his amateur days. Although he lacks the glamour and charisma of many top fighters, Soto is the sort of solid professional that is the backbone of boxing.

THE LIFE OF THE JOURNEYMAN HEAVYWEIGHT

All in a night's work: Touring loser Joseph Rabotte takes a few hard shots from 2008 U.S. Olympian Deontay Wilder (below) and then goes down in the first round and is counted out by referee Celestino Ruiz (opposite page).

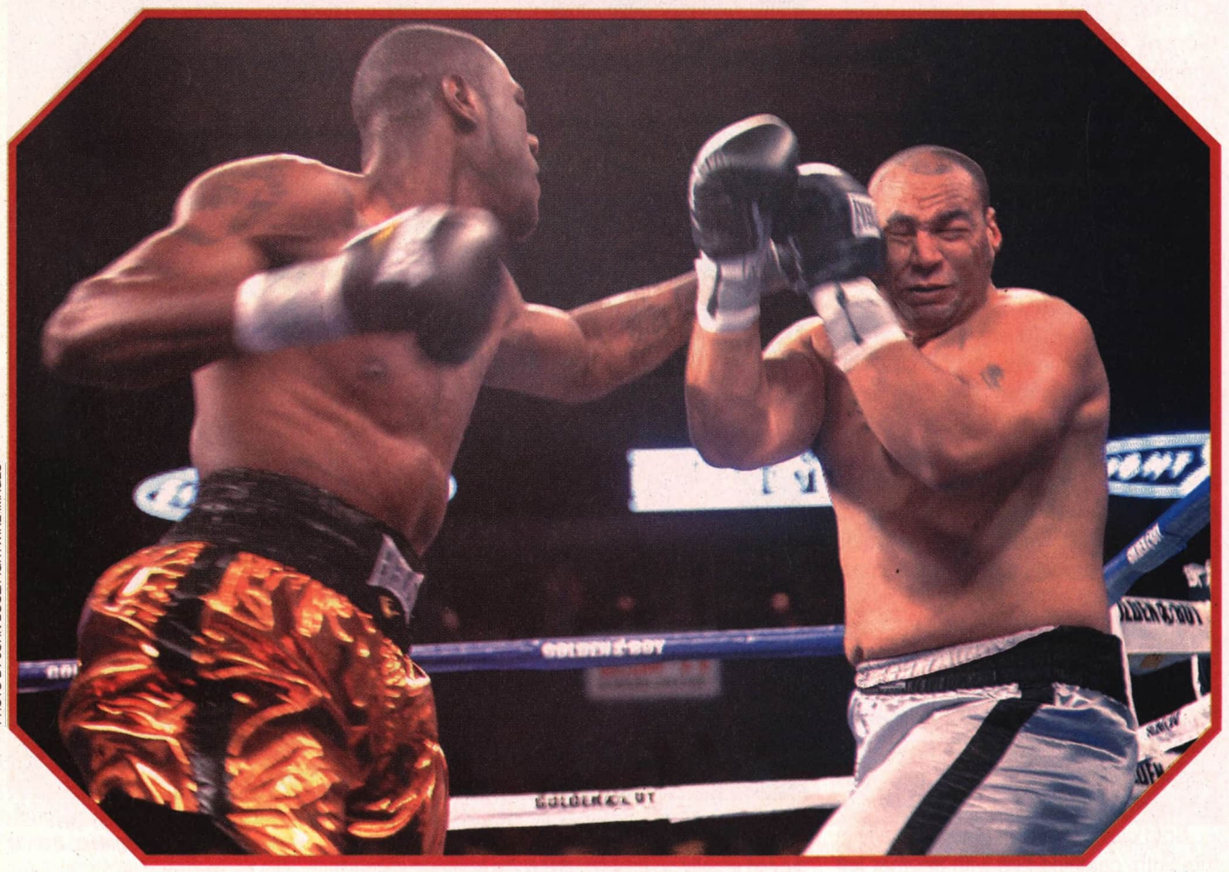


PHOTO BY JOHN BOOZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

"THE SPORT COULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT THEM"

PHOTO BY JOHN BOOZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

By William Dettloff

In late-April, U.S. Olympic heavyweight bronze medal winner Deontay Wilder knocked out one Joseph Rabotte in a round in Chicago. ESPN2 aired it on *Friday Night Fights*. Rabotte, a chubby, amiable-looking sort of the kind one might expect to find at the local pub or pizza joint, went away agreeably and with little fuss, landing nary a blow during the 150 seconds or so that he and Wilder spent together.

Wilder, 4-0 (4), celebrated his superiority with the kind of macho posturing one expects from young, ambitious athletes these days, and the crowd seemed to like it, but, then, a public beheading would draw spectators by the thousands in any town or city you can name.

By the time the main event rolled around a couple of commercial breaks later—Antonio Escalante KO 3 Gary Stark—you can bet not more than a handful of witnesses remembered

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Although Mitchell Rose (yellow trucks) only won two of his 14 pro bouts, one of those was a second-round TKO of previously undefeated Eric "Butterbean" Esch, the so-called "King Of The Four-Rounders." Rose alleged he refused an offer to take a dive.

Rabotte's name or could pick him out of a lineup if asked. Such is the life of a journeyman heavyweight: Get in, fall down, get paid, go home. And, importantly, don't get hurt.

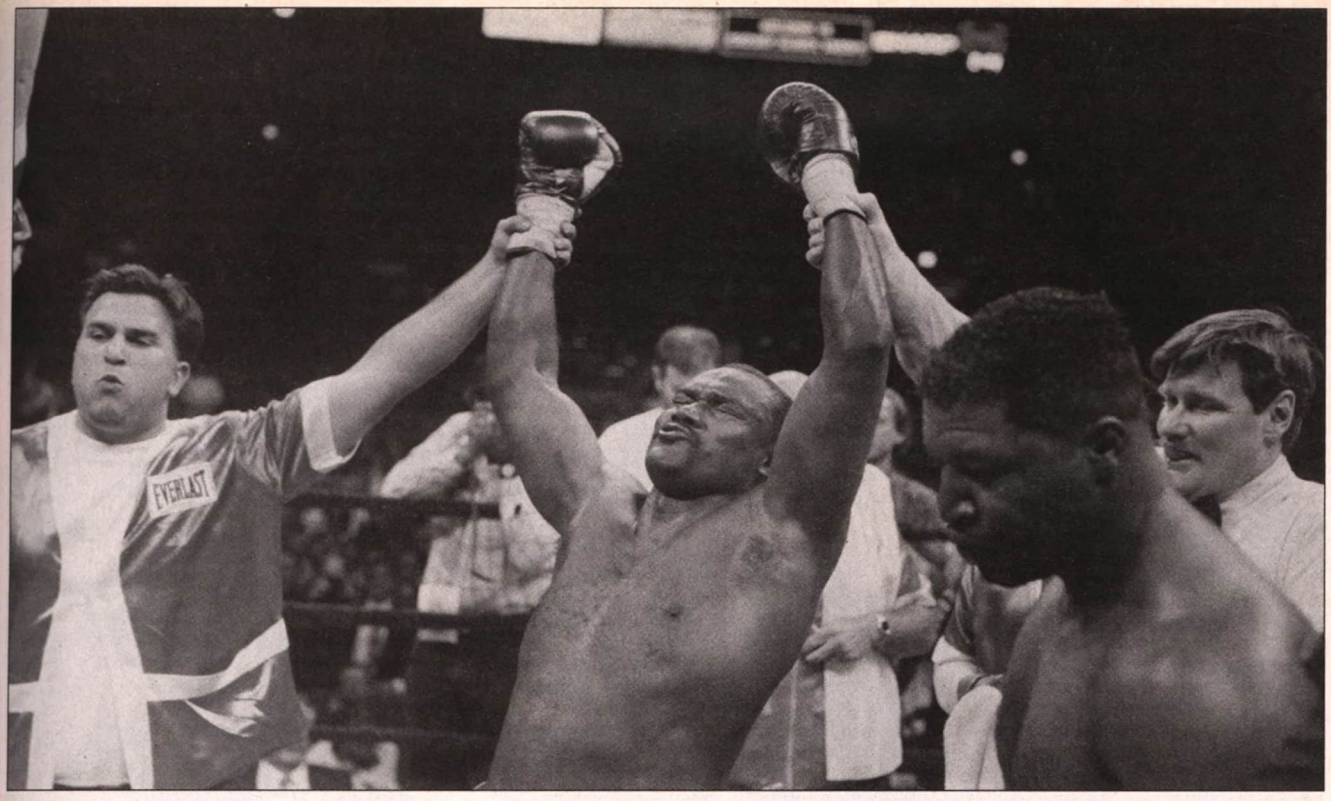
In the strictest sense, Rabotte doesn't really qualify as a true journeyman heavyweight. Going in to the Wilder bout, he'd fought but eight times, going 3-5 (1) with all five losses by knockout. But you can see where he's headed. Three of the guys who stopped him were unbeaten, including Wilder. If Rabotte hangs around long enough, he can accrue one of those double-digit sub-.500 records that are the envy of no one, but whose owners are an important part of the sport nonetheless.

Journeymen heavyweights are the blue-collar workers of the heavyweight division: the plumbers, the landscapers, the trash collectors, the roofers. The fans don't particularly care for them or respect them, most media view them with snooty disdain, and the men whose records they pad, the hopeful contenders and champions of the future, give most of them hardly a second thought while on their ascent. But they are absolutely essential to the business of boxing.

"The sport couldn't exist without them," Steve Munisteri told THE RING.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Not all journeymen start out that way. Robert Davis (left) was still an unbeaten prospect when he won a 10-round decision over Charles Shufford in 2000. But things deteriorated soon after that, and Davis is now a steady loser with 10 defeats on his record.



Top-of-the-line journeyman Jesse Ferguson parlayed an upset victory over Ray Mercer (pictured looking dejected on the right-hand side of foreground) into a heavyweight title shot and the biggest purse of his career, a jackpot of more than $500,000.

Munisteri has managed a slew of heavyweights over the last decade, including David Bostice, Robert Davis, Malcom Tann, Raphael Butler, Obed Sullivan, Travis Walker, and even Ike Ibeabuchi toward the end of Ibeabuchi's all-too-brief career.

To illustrate the importance of the role trialhorses play in the sport and especially in the heavyweight division, Munisteri identified the several classes that exist among journeymen.

There are classes of journeymen? Who knew?

"The first group is made up of the record-builder," Munisteri said. "He offers no real threat or test at all. They end up about 5-20 and don't command very much in terms of purses. About three-dozen of them make the rounds on the circuit. They never were prospects but stay in the sport. They're battered warriors and really get beaten up."

Look at the record of any young heavyweight and you'll see these guys all over the place. They come from Minnesota and Georgia, Idaho and Missouri. They all take on the young guns, one after another. They clock in, take their shot, it fails, they clock out, and go home.

The next day they go to work on a scaffold or under a sink or in a kitchen or tattoo parlor and wait for the phone to ring. They're not called on to win or even to look good. They are hired to be a number and to fall down, in that order.

But even these guys can catch lightning in a bottle once in a while. Mitchell Rose was 1-6-1 (1) and had been knocked out four times when Top Rank, feeling safe, put him on Butterbean's plate at Madison Square Garden underneath the Oscar De La Hoya- Jesse James Leija fight in 1995. Butterbean, or Eric Esch to those outside the trailer park, was 14-0 (9) at the time, a good draw we're sorry to say, and in full circus act mode.

But Rose, unbeknownst to the suits at Top Rank, had been a fairly good Golden Glover as an amateur, and that was all it took to beat the 'Bean. Rose stopped him in the second round, the first and for a long time the last loss on a record that was more padded than the bras at an all-girl junior high school.

It was the last win of Rose's career and he retired 2-11 (2). But not before claiming, interestingly, that someone from Top Rank's offices had approached him before the fight with Butterbean and asked him to lie down. The claim was never proved.

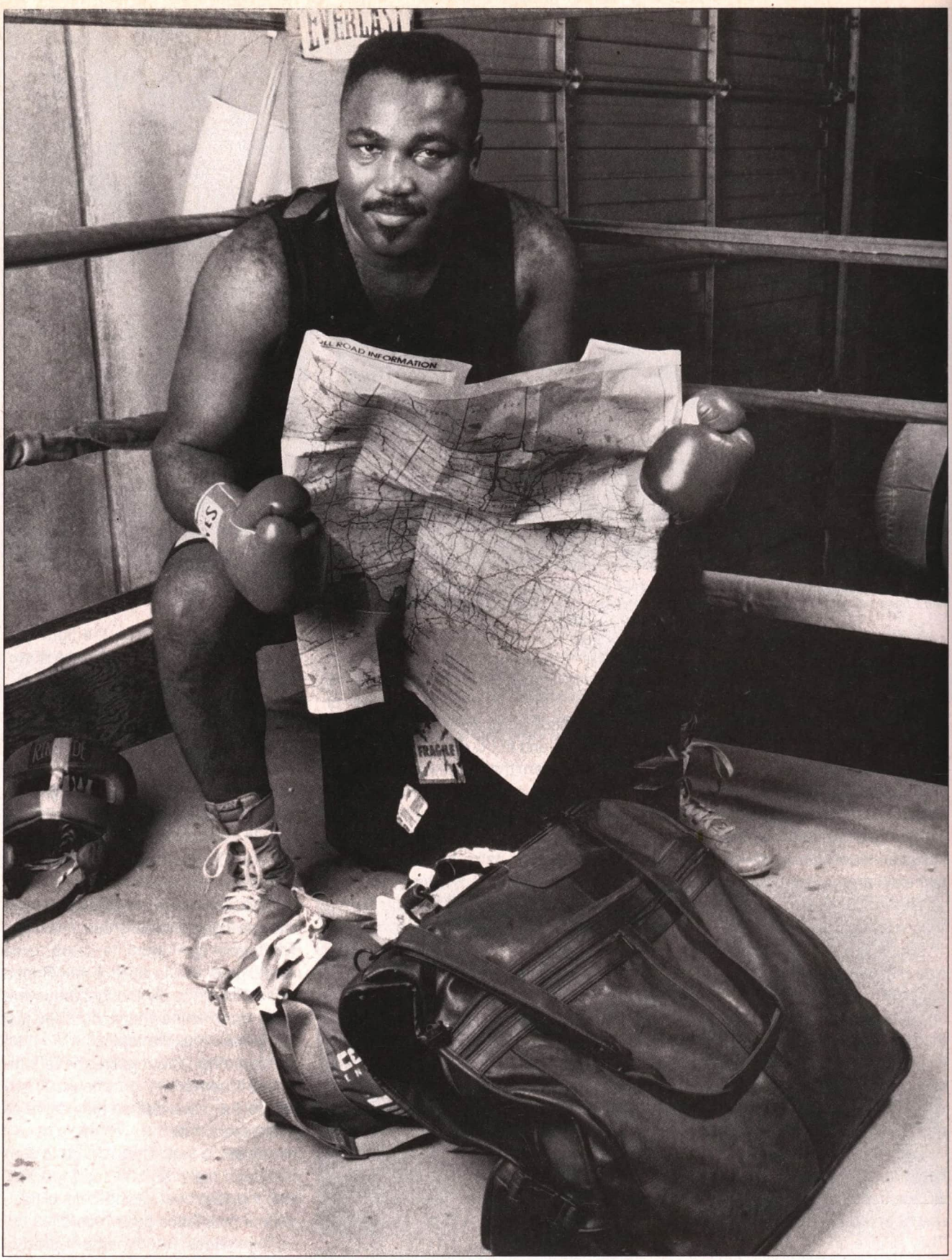
"I didn't want their money, I just wanted to knock him out," he said at the time.

At any rate, Rose was the exception. Most of the guys with records like his never have that kind of moment. But the guys in the second group have many of them. They just can't get to the next level. They can't pull it off.

"The next group is made up of guys who were going somewhere, but it just didn't work out," Munisteri said. "Like my old guys, David Bostice and Robert Davis. People really thought they were going to go somewhere, but they just didn't make it to the top.

According to Munisteri, these journeymen serve two purposes. "They can beat a pretender, so they serve as gatekeepers. And they can make decent money doing that. They can go to Germany and make $50,000 or $100,000. And, they can beat B- and C- level fighters and maintain a good record."

Think Ross Puritty, who retired in 2007 at 31-20 (27), but not before first holding the heavily favored Tommy



Legendary journeyman Everett "Big Foot" Martin has his bags packed and map in hand, ready to hit the road in search of another payday. Despite his loser status, Martin did manage a victory over former heavyweight titleholder Tim Witherspoon and went the distance with George Foreman.

Morrison to a draw in their fight in New Jersey in 1994. Then he scored the victory that still gets ink: the 11th-round TKO of Wladimir Klitschko in 1998. In Kiev, Ukraine, no less. In between? Losses to Chris Byrd, Larry Donald, Corrie Sanders, Michael Grant, and Hasim Rahman, among others.

The standard-bearer for this group might be Jesse Ferguson, maybe the preeminent journeyman of the 1980s and '90s. In one of the great heavyweight stories of the era, Ferguson was brought in as a tune-up for Ray Mercer prior to Mercer's proposed fight with Riddick Bowe for the heavyweight title.

On the undercard of Bowe's destruction of Michael Dokes, Ferguson, at 36 years old and a prohibitive underdog, outworked and outfought Mercer, who was clearly unprepared. Ferguson alleged afterward that Mercer tried to bribe him to throw the fight once it was clear Ferguson would win. (An investigation later found Mercer innocent of any wrongdoing.) Either way, Ferguson got his win and the big payday that followed.

"Mercer didn't train for me and he didn't respect me," Ferguson said at the time. "But that's not my fault. If I win the fight [against Bowe], I know I can get millions. But if I don't, I'll use the money to go to school. I'm not going to build a castle. I'm used to living in a shack."

Of course, Bowe obliterated Ferguson, but that was hardly the point. Ferguson's career-high payday had been $45,000 he got for letting Mike Tyson try to drive Ferguson's nose into his brain. He'd gotten just $10,000 for the Mercer fight. For getting blown out by Bowe? More than $500,000. That's the mother lode, and though Ferguson could have ridden it into retirement, he fought another six years and retired in 1999 at 26-18 (16).

Most journeymen don't get near that kind of money or that close to the heavyweight title. Many satisfy themselves with moral victories. Everett "Big Foot" Martin fought and lost to most of the bigger-name heavyweights of the 1990s and ended his career 20-39 (9) with a 20-fight losing streak.

But when he lasted the full 10 rounds against George Foreman in their fight in 1989, thus ending Foreman's 18-fight kayo streak, he paraded around the ring at the end, hands held high, grinning broadly and yelling, "I went the distance with a legend!"

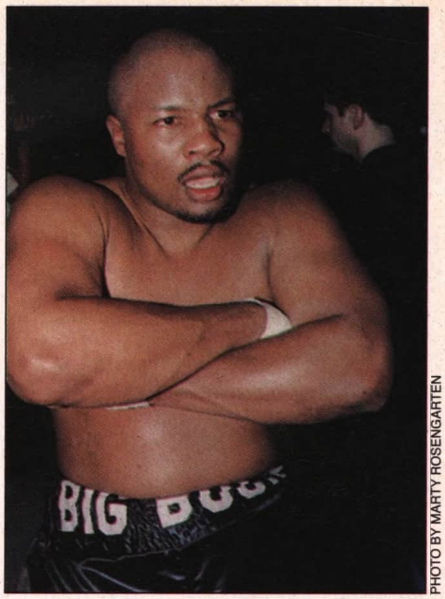


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

There are a number of journeymen who are actually pretty good fighters capable of springing an occasional upset. Among them is Sedreck "Big Buck" Fields, who holds wins over Shannon Briggs and Al Cole.

Martin's only big win prior to that was a decision over comebacking former heavyweight beltholder Tim Witherspoon.

Even the most unassuming journeyman can pull a rabbit out of a hat, or at least come close. Louis Monaco was 16-36 (8) when he met comebacking former heavyweight champion Buster Douglas in May 1997. Monaco's Mike Weaver-like physique belied a chin of pure daffodil, but he hit Douglas on the jaw and knocked him cold. Problem was it came a second after the bell ending round one and the hapless Monaco was disqualified.

You'd think these guys who suffer knockouts in the double-digits and against big punchers would be the poster boys for dementia. Longtime journeyman Marcus Rhode, who at this writing is 34-38 (29) and has been stopped 33 times, sets the record straight.

"You don't see a lot of heavyweights get punch drunk because we don't have

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Marcus Rhode winces as Calvin Brock lands a glancing hook. Despite being stopped 33 times, Rhode claims he's never been hurt in any of his fights. Moreover, he has actually managed to win 24 of his 76 professional fights.

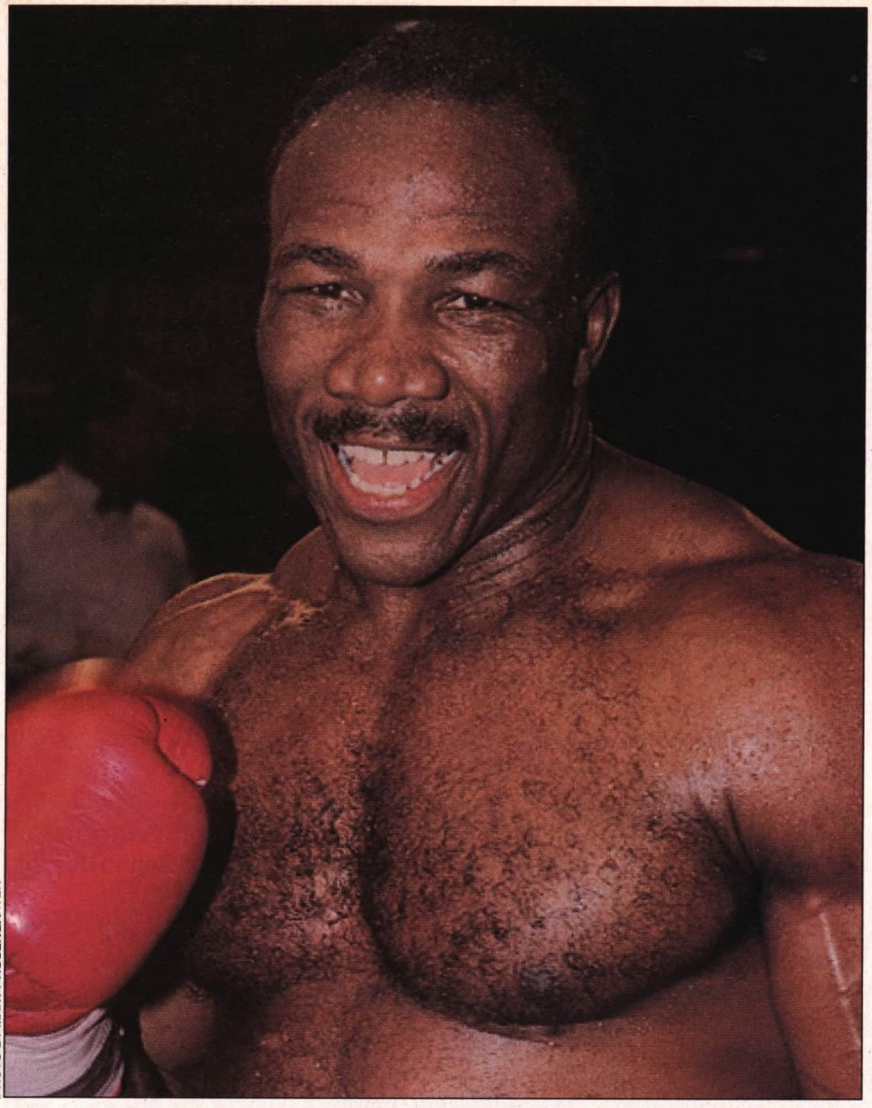


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Maryland's super tough Marion Wilson tallied a record of 12-41-4 (4) between August 1989 and February 2007, but was only stopped once, and that was on cuts. This photo was taken after Wilson beat previously undefeated Paea Wolfgramm, who was 14-0 going into their 1998 bout.

to dry out to make weight," he said. "Other guys get dehydrated and lose that fluid and it hurts them."

As for his own health status, Rhode says, "I've never been knocked out. I've been hurt. Just never been really rattled."

When you talk to him and hear how clear-headed he is, you know it's true, and that's the thing about journeymen: They don't kill themselves trying to win. That's not what they're there to do. You won't often see a heavyweight journeyman take a bad, prolonged beating. They know what they're doing. They get hit, they go down, and then they wait for the phone to ring.

"I worry more about someone like Evander Holyfield than I do about Marcus," said Stacy Goodson, who books fights for Rhode and other journeymen heavyweights in Missouri and the surrounding areas. "Marcus just doesn't take that kind of punishment that Holyfield does."

If there is one group of journeymen that take more than they should, it's the class Munisteri describes as, "guys that were never prospects but are really tough guys. Guys like Sedreck Fields and Marion Wilson. They serve two purposes: They're gatekeepers to get rid of pretenders and they can beat B-level guys and even A-level guys if everything else goes right. They can also legitimize someone as a prospect."

Indeed, Fields was just 9-9 (8) when he shocked Shannon Briggs with an

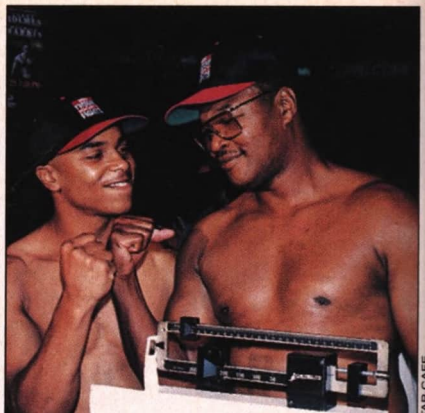


PHOTO COURTESY OF ALL STAR CAFE

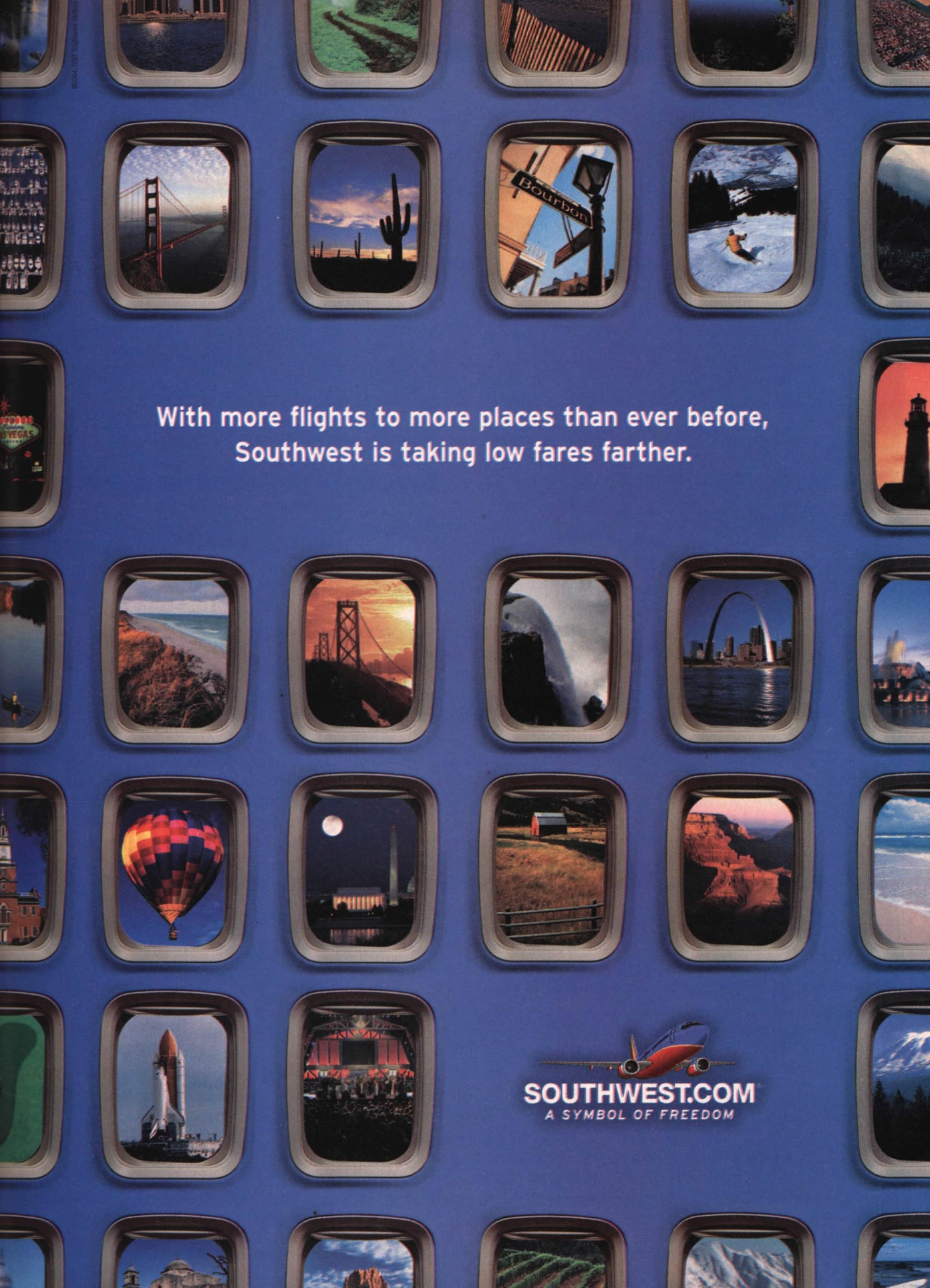
Maurice Harris was a much better fighter than his 20-14-2 (10) record seems to indicate, and in 1997 he lost a controversial split decision to comebacking Larry Holmes at Madison Square Garden. But inconsistency dogged Harris' career and he never really broke free of the journeyman role.

eight-round decision win in Madison Square Garden in 2000. He also beat then-10-1-1 (5) Willie Palms in 2002 and former cruiserweight champion Al Cole the same year. Did he also lose to just about every other decent heavyweight on the planet? Damn right he did. But none of them could afford to take him for granted.

Marion Wilson falls into the same category. His record when he retired in 2007 was an unsightly 12-41-4 (5), but in those 41 losses he was stopped just once, and that was on a cut. Throw in there, too, Levi Billups, who retired 21-22-1 (12), but every once in a while he beat someone he wasn't supposed to, like Terrence Lewis, who was 21-1 (17) when Billups stopped him in Idaho.

And don't forget Maurice Harris, who was a pitiable 9-8-2 (5) when he lost a squeaker to a comebacking Larry Holmes and went on to beat Jeremy Williams and Sergei Liakhovich. Yes, he ended up 20-14 (10), but ask the guys he beat if Mo Harris could fight.

All these guys could fight. Every one of them. Are they world class? No. But a lot of journeymen are damn good at what they do even if what they do is lose; someone has to do it. Besides, it's better than being no good at anything. ■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Nonito Donaire

"I'm Finally Boxing For Myself"

To look at Nonito Donaire in street clothes you would never guess that he was one of the best fighters in the world and that his 112-pound frame could generate lethal punching power. In fact, the baby-faced IBF flyweight titleholder, who will turn 27 in November, still gets carded at nightclubs.

Actually, Donaire likes it when people underestimate him, because he's been underestimated his whole life. It is just more fuel for the inner fire that drives him in the ring.

Donaire, 21-1 (14), is a boxing lifer, though he's had a love-hate relationship with the sport throughput most of his life. At this moment, he is back in love with the Sweet Science. Since handing Vic Darchinyan his first career loss and winning the IBF strap in July 2007, he is enjoying the best run of his career. Donaire has tallied three successful defenses, turning back the challenges of Luis Maldonado (KO 8), Moruti Mthalane (KO 6), and Raul Martinez (KO 4).

What's more impressive than the victories themselves is that Donaire has succeeded in the midst of controversy and personal turmoil. He recently severed ties with his father and longtime trainer, Nonito Donaire Sr. The Martinez fight was the first time he's fought without his father in his corner.

Another major change came in August 2008 when Donaire married the former Rachel Marcial, a Filipino-American who has brought a measure of stability to his life.

And while there is only one Manny Pacquiao, Donaire has also benefited from the Filipino people's current infatuation with boxing. His fan base is growing in his native land and with Filipino-Americans.

A few weeks after Donaire beat Martinez, THE RING Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito spoke at length with "The Filipino Flash" about his life and career.

Santoliquito reports: "One of the first things you notice about Nonito is that he isn't afraid to laugh at himself. He's a very easy-going, affable young man with a winning smile and great future ahead of him."

THE RING: How does it feel to be the second-most famous boxer in the Philippines?

Nonito Donaire: It feels good *(laughs)*. I'm not into being competitive. I never saw myself as a competitive type of person. That's why I could never see myself competing with Manny's popularity.

THE RING: Prior to your recent knockout of Raul Martinez, you had only fought three times in the Philippines. How come?

ND: I turned pro and came back to the Philippines and tried to make it there. Nothing was happening, so I went back to the United States, but boxing really wasn't in my heart that much. I was out for maybe a year, something around that area (seven months, from November 2002 to June 2003). I was around 21 then.

THE RING: What do you mean when you say that boxing wasn't in your heart?

ND: There were a lot of things that were going on, father issues, and my love of the sport wasn't there. I just did it because I was an amateur standout and I was always expected to box. Everything in our family was always boxing. It was the life my father chose for me. I didn't know what I wanted to do.

THE RING: It doesn't sound like you were in control of your own destiny.

ND: No, I wasn't. It was all in my father's hands, and I did what everyone else expected me to do. I went through this soul-searching thing, thinking maybe I should go to school; maybe I should do something different. I was scared to go into the ring because I felt I didn't have it in me. I felt a lot of pressure coming from my pops and I felt pressure from everyone.

THE RING: What was it like carrying the weight of expectations?

ND: It became too much. I was boxing since I was 10. I had a scholarship offer to Northern Michigan University and my mom wanted me to take it. My dad, however, didn't think it was something for me. I felt I had to listen to my dad. Being young, you tend to fold. You don't know what to do, and then you turn to the very person who led you in that direction.

THE RING: Any regrets about briefly quitting?

ND: Not really, because it made me who I am. I was hanging with friends and getting drunk, but I realized that it

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Donaire downs Raul Martinez for his fifth-straight kayo victory. The fight took place at the Araneta Coliseum, the venue for the legendary "Thrilla In Manila." Donaire's popularity has grown to such a point that he's easily the second-most recognized fighter in the Philippines—behind some guy named Pacquiao.

wasn't me. I realized I wasn't that type of person. And I realized how much I loved boxing.

The Ring: Were you working when you weren't boxing?

ND: For a while I was relying on my mom for money. I was a momma's boy *(laughs)*. Then I got a job at PetSmart, working with dogs. It was menial labor job. But it's the first time I really felt normal, because I didn't have to get up and train, train, train. Even in high school and when I was a little boy, I was waking up four, five in the morning and running hills. That's what I did. It seems that's all I did. That was my life.

The Ring: Tell us about your first amateur fight.

ND: My first fight as a kid I literally pissed in my pants going to the ring. I was freaking out. They were putting the gloves on me and I was so damned scared that I literally peed in my pants.

The Ring: Let me get this straight: In your first fight you peed your pants and then beat the piss out of the kid you were facing?

ND: That's a good way to put it *(laughs)*. I was always afraid to hit someone. Then, in my first fight this kid hit me and I went nuts. I beat the crap out of him. Looking back, I can remember my father kept telling me, "Hit him, hit him, hit him." There was nowhere I could run in the ring *(laughs)*, so I hit him. The kid hit me first and that seemed to trigger something. I started throwing straight punches, no hooks or uppercuts. I remember that feeling. I had no worries in my head. Just the one thought: *I'm going to kill him before he kills me.* I made his mouth and nose bleed. I was so surprised with myself that I won. I didn't know I was capable of stuff like that.

The Ring: How empowering was that?

ND: Everyone was looking at me and shaking my hand. My father gave me a big hug and it felt really good to be on top for once. Before, everyone used to pick on me, but in the ring I got a chance to fight back and it was okay to hit back. It gave me a little confidence. Inside the ring, the confidence was there. It was like I was a different Nonito, and even to this day I'm different in the ring. In front of everyone I was the happy kid. But inside I was sad and there was some anger there, well, a lot of anger there. There were times I would just cry in school. Boxing was really my outlet for my anger. When I fought as an amateur, all that anger came out. There was no sense of winning or losing. I just want to punish all of the people who punished me.

The Ring: Where did that anger come from?

ND: Someone was always making fun of me. I have big ears and they called me Dumbo *(laughs)*. I had buckteeth and they called me bucktooth beaver *(laughs)*. It's funny now that I'm an adult, but at the time it was really cruel. I was a little boy. I wasn't looked at as being cool. Even the other kids who people made fun of made fun of me. That's where I stood on the school food chain.

The Ring: How bad was it?

ND: It was really bad. I had no confidence then, none at all. I thought that was the way the world was. I was

always afraid of everything. It was mostly a bad emotional time for me. I didn't feel like I had any friends. It started in the Philippines with my big ears and my teeth and my nose was always dripping. In the United States, it was very different. The cruelty was a lot of different. All these kids were bigger than me. In fourth grade I would sit in the corner because no one would pick me to play different sports. But in sixth grade I started boxing and I was starting to become a better athlete, so I'd get picked over the fat kid in football *(laughs).* I was always chosen because I had speed. I was really agile, but I still got bullied anyway.

The Ring: Did you ever say anything to your parents about the bullying?

ND: That's the one thing about kids, they're afraid to say anything to their parents because they're afraid something else would happen. I can imagine if I ever brought this to my dad. He would have wanted to go out and fight these kids.

The Ring: Did the bullying ever stop?

ND: When I was still in high school, I started being on TV in my amateur fights. One of the bigger guys who picked on me started showing respect. It was different then. No one challenged me. I wasn't afraid of him anymore and it wasn't because I got taller or anything. I was still little.

The Ring: Was there anybody besides your father who encouraged you to box?

ND: Andre Ward, the U.S. Olympian, had a big impact on me. He got me back into the sport. He hadn't won the Olympics when I first met him, but he was helping me out. He would bring me to do a lot of things with him, like running and training. I didn't have any money, so he would slip me a 20 to pay for my travel. I didn't have enough money to go from my house to the gym. Andre and I were always together. He kept telling me, "Nonito, you have what it takes." He used to tell me if I stuck in the amateurs longer, I would have been an Olympic gold medalist.

The Ring: What finally caused the split between you and your father?

ND: There was a lot of tension building up between me and my father after the Vic Darchinyan fight. But there has always been tension between the two of us. I never felt I had a say in my own training, and it's not because I'm pigheaded. He'd yell at me when I wasn't able to go 12 rounds with the mitts. He'd yell at me in front of everyone, and always pushing me, disregarding my pride and what my body could do. He thought he created me, and to make me feel guilty he told me that I was getting bigheaded, that I was bigtiming him.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

"My first fight as a kid, I literally pissed in my pants going to the ring. I was freaking out. They were putting the gloves on me and I was so damned scared that I literally peed in my pants"

The Ring: I understand that the relationship with your father had an impact on your fight with Luis Maldonado.

ND: The day of the fight and the day before the fight, I was going to quit again. I wasn't going into that ring. Believe me, I wasn't going into that ring! Watch that fight again and notice my eyes. They're really puffy because I was crying the night before the fight and the day of the fight. There were things said that made me want to quit again. I wanted my girlfriend around me—now my wife, Rachel—and my father didn't want that. He didn't want her around. It was an old-school thing. He thought I was going to do something fighters aren't supposed to do before they fight, like have sex (*laughs*). That's classic. But it wasn't just that. There were money issues and trust issues. What made me cry was that he didn't trust me anymore. My father didn't trust me and that hurts just saying it. All my life he was the one who programmed me and his remote didn't work anymore. That pissed him off.

The Ring: Even with all the problems, you stopped Maldonado in the eighth round.

ND: My mom was there and we prayed, and Rachel was there and she helped me through it. I didn't really want to go into the ring that night. I wouldn't listen to him when my father told me to do

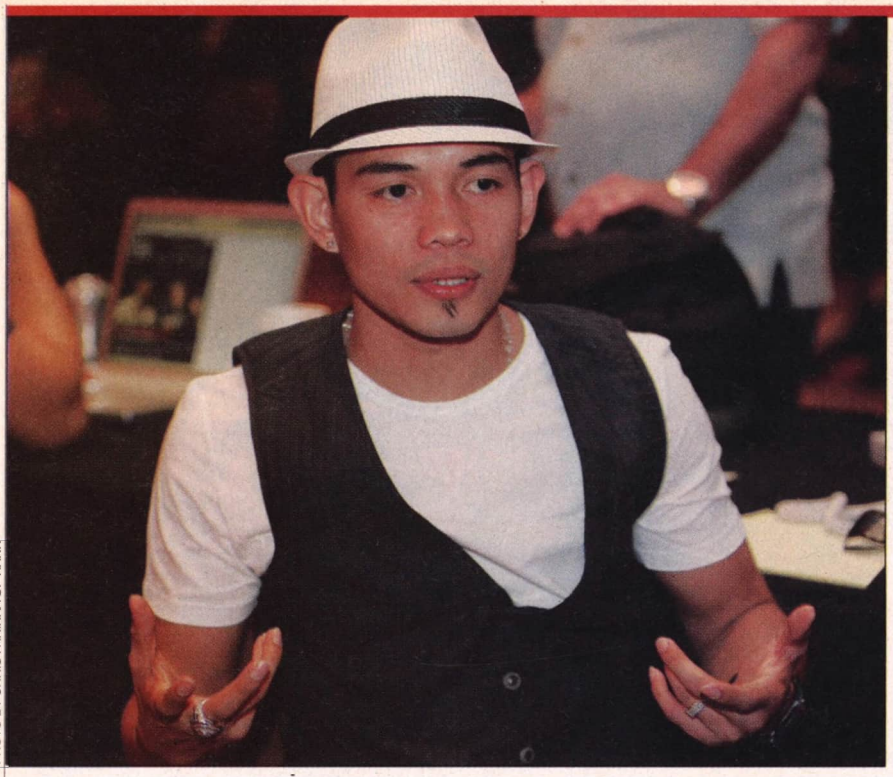

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

"Someone was always making fun of me. I have big ears and they called me Dumbo. I had buckteeth and they called me bucktooth beaver. It's funny now that I'm an adult, but at the time, it was really cruel."

something. Notice me in the corner of that fight. He's talking and I'm looking straight ahead. He would talk and I didn't hear him. I thought about quitting and losing, but I just have a lot of pride and I can't let anyone beat me anymore. I can't surrender to my father's pressure and the negative energy that he tried putting in my head. My pride as a Filipino fighter kept me going. I won't lose again to anyone. But in some old-school circles in the Philippines, they might say it's being big-headed that I defied my dad.

THE RING: Did the problems between your father and you also affect your performance against Moruti Mthalane?

ND: I didn't train hard at all. The aura around me was so negative, and when there's so much negativity your body tends to wear out. The fight went on and afterward my father was very disappointed by my performance. I was disappointed too. I know what I'm capable of doing, and it bothered me that I didn't do it and that my father wasn't happy. He was disappointed. We were arguing and I wasn't listening going into the Mthalane fight. He even asked my manager, Cameron Dunkin, what would happen to my career if I lost. Cameron didn't tell me that until after the fight. I kept asking my father how I did, but he didn't say a word to me after the Mthalane fight. But I knew he was very disappointed in me.

THE RING: If he didn't say anything, how did you know he was disappointed?

ND: When he went back to the Philippines, all these things started circulating around the Internet about how he wasn't impressed with the fight and how my wife is to blame. That's how I found out. He never said anything to my face. Nothing. It was spread all over that I was a bad, ungrateful kid who has a big head. That doesn't go over too well in the Philippines.

THE RING: Did Rachel get the blame?

ND: Rachel had nothing to do with it, but my father was claiming that Rachel was messing up my training, which was silly. She doesn't know how to hold the mitts. The only thing I remember was asking her to get me some water, when my father was training some other guy. My father saw Rachel as a threat to him. She was the one who told me that I had to put my foot down. She made me realize I didn't want to be like other fighters and end up broke. There was money going to my father's friends for tickets and rooms. I was always being the obedient son, buying people flights and rooms. It had to stop.

THE RING: Rachel changed that?

ND: Rachel is a strong girl and she doesn't like anyone taking advantage of me. She's the one who stopped me from giving free tickets and flying people to fights and giving them rooms.

THE RING: It is part of the Filipino culture for the son to do whatever the father says?

ND: It is the culture. But I was dealing with these people who could afford the plane tickets and the rooms. Still, I always said yes. I didn't want to fight about it. My father has a lot of friends. I felt like I spent all my life making people happy. I suppose that goes with any culture though. They see people on top, and they want to hang on. All I know is that I'm proud to be Filipino. We're so hospitable that people take advantage of it. People like me and Manny, we can't say no. That's where my wife comes in. She tells everybody no *(laughs)*. The money I make now is the money our kids are going to live on and the money I'll live on for the rest of my life. I grew up with my mother and father fighting over money each morning. I don't want that to be me.

THE RING: How did you meet Rachel?

ND: She won this Taekwondo tournament, and I went to the after-party on September 13, 2007, my brother's birthday. I'll say she approached me,

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Nonito Donaire Sr. rushed to congratulate his son following the title-winning knockout of Vic Darchinyan in July 2007. After a lot of emotional turmoil, the father-son team has split up, a difficult decision but one that has given the fighter a fresh outlook on his life and career.

but she'll say something different. I was in line to get into this club lounge for the after-party and she tried to get me in. Someone saw me and they let me in. I walked in and she introduced herself to me. I was talking to someone when she approached me. I said hello and went back to talking to the guy. When I turned back around to talk with her, she was gone. I thought, *What a bitch*. Later that night, we danced and you could tell the sparks were going.

Rachel *(interrupting)*: All my friends told me he was a world champion. It was my party for winning a gold medal, and I thought it was rude the way he turned his back on me to talk to someone else. He treated me like I was one of his crazed fans, and then he wouldn't let

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ

Donaire lands a right en route to a sixth-round knockout of Moruti Mthlane in November 2008. It was Donaire's final fight with his father in his corner. Sadly, they have not spoken to each other since.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Donaire's wife, Rachel, has been a source of comfort and stability to him. "She keeps me straight and firm with decisions," Donaire said, though she's also been characterized as a dividing force between Donaire and his father, Nonito Sr.

me alone (*laughs*). He had his eye on me. He doesn't like to drive, but he would drive from Sam Leandro to Sam Mateo just to bring me dinner. The funny part is that he was the first to say "I love you." He said that to me a week after we met (*laughs*).

THE RING: How has marriage changed your life?

ND: It changed for the positive. I don't worry about anyone screwing me over for anything. Rachel completely takes care of me and I have my best friend with me. That's the way I see it. I don't have to go out and hang out with my friends. I'm happy chilling at home and watching TV or watching a movie. It's a lot easier for me. I'm moving toward becoming a better person. We are the complete opposites of each other. She tries to apply common sense and logic to things in boxing *(laughs)*, and I tell her to calm down because there isn't much common sense or logic in boxing. She keeps me straight and firm with decisions. I don't want to say no to people, and she says no out of common sense.

THE RING: Knocking out Darchinyan was a breakthrough fight for you. What do you recall about that fight?

ND: I wasn't at 100 percent when I fought Darchinyan. I didn't spar much. The longest sparring session was seven rounds. I did a lot of running and a lot of work with the mitts. It was the biggest fight of my life, but we didn't have enough money to go to training camp and stay in hotels for weeks or months. We did most of the training two weeks before the fight, and that's almost unheard of. Normally, that's when you slow down and give your body rest.

THE RING: Even with those problems, did you have a good feeling going into the fight?

ND: Yeah, I did. I was confident I would knock him out. People would wonder if I was serious or not. I just had one thing in mind: to beat him and knock him out. That gave me more satisfaction than anything I ever did before.

THE RING: Did Darchinyan say anything to you after the fight?

ND: He didn't know where he was after the fight *(laughs)*. I may have hit him so hard, he didn't even know he was knocked out *(laughs)*. Vic is very annoying. He's the kind of guy you love if he's on your team and hate when he's on the other team, and he's on the other team with me. I'll be honest. I wanted him to get up after I knocked him down, so I could punch him some more. I like fighting those types of guys because they bring out the best in me. They're kind of what drives me. Vic didn't show me any respect. Maybe that's why I ran around the ring like a lunatic after realizing I'd become a world champion.

THE RING: Darchinyan has rebounded well since you knocked him out. Would you like you fight him again?

ND: Darchinyan is the bully who picked on everyone. I definitely want him again. I want to kill this guy. I want to beat and punish him because he's a bully. I want to shut him up once and for all. I haven't ducked him and I haven't spoke to him at all, because I can't understand him anyway *(laughs)*. It's not that I hate him. I respect him as a fighter. He's cool when he's a fighter, but the person that I am outside of the ring is different than him. In my mind, he's still a bully. Maybe he was one of those kids who were bullied too. When he fought my brother, Glenn, he was flexing and all of his people were talking crap. But he was afraid of me because I didn't back down. I stood tall. He didn't flex when we weighed in and he didn't look me in the eye too long.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

"Darchinyan is the bully who picked on everyone. I definitely want him again. I want to kill this guy. I want to beat and punish him because he's a bully. I want to shut him up once and for all."

THE RING: Tell me about your current trainers.

ND: The Penalosa brothers Dodie Boy, Jonathan, and Gerry. They've basically extended what my father already has taught me. The big difference is that with these guys, I'm my own man. I'm the one who is getting up in the morning and these guys treat me like a man. They have respect for me. Gerry taught me how to be defensive and tactical. Dodie Boy teaches power and Jonathan teaches speed. They all have a specialty that helps me. If someone has to take the reigns, it's Gerry. He fought a great fight and showed fearlessness in taking on Juan Manuel Lopez, but his focus now will be on training me. These guys are great not only inside the ring, but outside the ring. I love working with them.

THE RING: Has it been difficult staying at 112 pounds?

ND: I love junk food. Lately, I haven't had much junk food, thanks to Rachel. I've kept my weight down to around 130, 135. I was killing myself to make 112. Against Raul Martinez, that's the best training camp I ever had. I had been in good shape before, but nowhere near the kind of shape I was in for the Martinez fight. I felt really comfortable and very confident.

THE RING: How much has Manny Pacquiao's tremendous success affected you and other Filipino boxers?

ND: Manny is pretty much the Philippines' Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and Michael Phelps all wrapped up into one *(laughs)*. He's the one who has made the country a big fan of boxing. He's an icon. It's impacted me. Manny opened up Filipino boxing to the world. Early in my career, people wouldn't sign me because I wasn't Mexican or Puerto Rican. I was just a steppingstone early in my career. Filipino fighters never got

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the push we're all getting now. That's why I'm so thankful to Manny for opening up that door. Without him, it would be so hard for us.

THE RING: Can you see yourself fighting Pacquiao one day?

ND: The guy is a monster. He's a mutant with super powers *(laughs)*. Every time he gets into that ring, he gets better. For me, he's the king of boxing. I seek the very best out there, but my loyalty is toward him. You have to show respect to the king. I'll turn 27 this year and he just turned 30. I can see myself at 122 or 126 in a year or two from now, but it would shut the Philippines down if we ever fought. Manny pretty much does that already by himself *(laughs)*.

THE RING: Do you have a hit list?

ND: Not really. But I would like to fight Daisuke Naito. I told Top Rank to make it happen. I'll go anywhere or do anything to fight Naito or Pongsalek Wongjonkam. I'll go to Japan, but Thailand is a different level. That's a place you'd never win a decision.

THE RING: What kind of reaction do you get in the Philippines when you returned to fight Martinez in April?

ND: It took me an hour or two to go from the media room to my room and back again. It's a walk that would usually take me 10 minutes. I was mobbed that much. But I'm thankful for everyone's support. I got a good dose of how much the Philippines loves me at Manny's fight against Ricky Hatton. If I go to the mall, I'm mobbed. In restaurants, they come and take pictures and stuff. It's incredible how great the support fighters are getting in the Philippines.

THE RING: What was it like returning to your home province of Bohol?

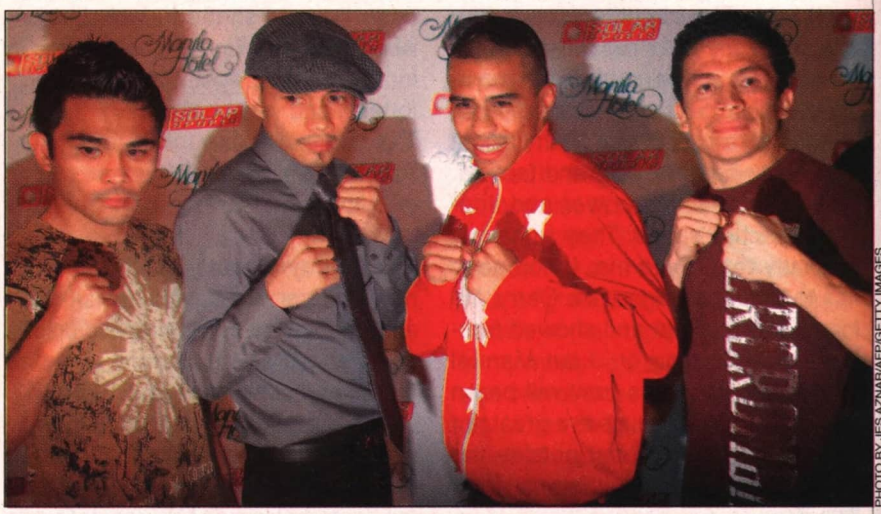
ND: I got to see all my friends who once made fun of me. They're the same age as me, but they look really old *(laughs)*. Maybe it's life wearing them down. They look at me much differently, of course, because I could have been one of those guys. They fish for food or work for a company. Life is taking them down to where their teeth are falling out.

THE RING: Without boxing, where do you think you would be?

ND: I don't know. I was working on my high school diploma. I'm still working on it. I'm in a good spot right now and I'm thankful for my faith in God and that things happen for a reason. I learned to never give up and do your best every time.

THE RING: What kind of relationship do you have with your father these days?

ND: I have no problems with my dad. We'll talk again one day. We both have a lot of growing up to do and realize this is part of life. I've moved on and the Martinez fight was the first time I ever fought without him. I learned a lot from the experiences with my father, but I want my sons to be who they want to be—without feeling the pressure and being controlled by me.



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Donaire (wearing cap) and Brian Viloria (far left) pose with opponents Raul Martinez and Ulises Solis prior to their April 2009 doubleheader in Manila. As fighters of Filipino heritage, the careers of both Donaire and Viloria have been given a huge boost thanks to Manny Pacquiao's amazing popularity.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

"I love to box, and it's the first time in my life that I can say that. So I want to keep it going. ... I'm confident when I enter that ring. There's no fear. I have a different view of boxing and a different life than before. I'm a happy man."

What hurts is that he's the person that I wanted to be growing up, a person who leads and is well respected. I am a big admirer of my father. He's a very talented guy. He cooks, does carpentry, electronics. He knows how to do everything. He grew up on his own. He grew up on the street. I suppose I am a compliment to my father the way I am. He wants to tell me what to do in my life, and I can understand that. But I am my own man.

THE RING: Have you spoken to your father recently?

ND: I last spoke with my father at the Moruti Mthalane fight in November 2008. There is no hatred toward each other. He's training a lot of fighters now in the Philippines and I'm busy doing my own thing. We're pretty much alike and I suppose that's why we butt heads all of the time. We don't accept our mistakes. But I have to stand up for myself. We're so alike that we know each other's personalities.

THE RING: How much longer do you see yourself fighting?

ND: I would like to do this as long as I can, like Bernard Hopkins. I want to accomplish a lot. I want to one day be a Hall of Famer. I want to see how far I can go with boxing. Training keeps me going. I love to box, and it's the first time in my life that I can say that. So I want to keep it going. I hated boxing at one time because I was forced to it. Now each day I look forward to training. When I'm not training, I get antsy and hotheaded and impatient. This time, I'm boxing for me. Hopefully, me and my father can get this out of the way and be a family again. I'm finally boxing for myself. I'm confident when I enter that ring. There's no fear. I have a different view of boxing and a different life than before. I'm a happy man. ■

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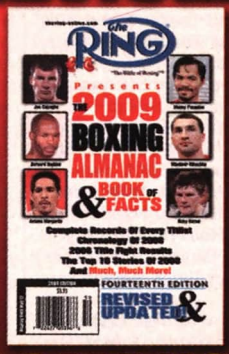

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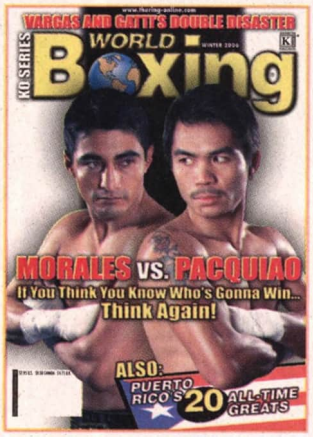

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Danny Williams W 12 John McDermott
Dominick Guinn KO 1 Johnnie White
Sam Sexton KO 8 Martin Rogan
Marat Jumanaliev KO 2 Janibek Otunchiev
Mariusz Wach KO 7 Julius Long
Kevin Johnson KO 6 Devin Vargas
DaVarryl Williamson KO 5 Carl Davis
Bowie Tupou KO 3 Chris Koval
Joey Abell KO 3 Billy Willis
Deontay Wilder KO 1 Charles Brown
Oliver McCall KO 2 John Hopoate
Elijah McCall KO 1 Chad Davis
Donnell Holmes KO 2 Ryan Thompson
Deontay Wilder KO 1 Joseph Rabotte

Cruiserweights

Giacobbe Fragomeni D 12 Krzysztof Wlodarczyk
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Marco Huck KO 5 Vitaliy Rusal
Danny Green KO 2 Anthony van Niekerk
Victor Ramirez W 12 Ali Ismailov
Tomasz Hutkowski W 10 Ben Nsafoah
Alexander Alexeev W 10 Max Alexander
Thabiso Mchunu KO 8 Soon Botes
Yoan Hernandez W 8 Aaron Williams
Aleksander Kotlobay KO 6 Lubos Suda

Light Heavyweights

Chad Dawson W 12 Antonio Tarver
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Beibut Shumenov KO 4 Byron Mitchell
Alfonso Lopez W 10 Ronald Weaver
Billy Boyle W 10 Shon Davies
Mark Tucker W 8 Ross Thompson
Tim Bell KO 9 Kane McKay
Brian Cohen KO 1 Robbie Tovar

Super Middleweights

Carl Froch KO 12 Jermain Taylor
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Andre Ward W 12 Edison Miranda
Allan Green KO 2 Carlos De Leon Jr.
Ruben Acosta W 12 Gustavo Kapusi
Karoly Balzsay KO 11 Maselino Masoe
Daniel Jacobs KO 2 Jose Varela
Matt Korobov KO 2 Anthony Bartinelli
Shawn Estrada KO 1 Nick Runningbear
Daniel Jacobs W 8 Michael Walker
Roman Shkarupa W 8 Vasily Andriyanov
James McGirt Jr. W 6 Patrick Perez
Dhafir Smith W 6 William Gill

Middleweights

Felix Sturm KO 7 Koji Sato
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Anthony Mundine W 12 Daniel Geale
Roman Karmazin KO 4 Luis Dos Santos
Craig McEwan W 10 Brian Vera
Gennady Martirosyan W 10 Vedran Akrap
Billy Lyell W 10 John Duddy
Gennady Golovkin KO 5 Anthony Greenidge
Oscar Veliz W 12 Nestor Battaglia
Erislandy Lara W 4 Chris Gray

Junior Middleweights

Cory Spinks W 12 Deandre Latimore
(*Wins Vacant IBF Title*)
Ryan Waters W 12 Eddie Delic
Ulises Lopez W 12 Javier Mamani
Ishe Smith W 6 Chris Gray
Gabriel Rosado W 10 Kassim Ouma
Ricardo Torres KO 10 Raul Pinzon
Alfonso Gomez KO 8 Juan Buendia
Jimmy Lange KO 5 Frank Houghtaling
Erislandy Lara KO 4 Edwin Vazquez

PHOTO BY ALEXIS CHABEZ/MAGICHOUR IMAGES

A left from super middleweight Andre Ward has Edison Miranda seeking cover

Grady Brewer KO 1 Reggie Nash
Vanes Martirosyan KO 1 Harrison Cuello
Yory Boy Campas D 8 Hector Camacho Sr.
Matthew Hatton W 8 Ernesto Zepeda

Welterweights

Paul Malignaggi W 8 Christopher Fernandez
Daniele Petrucci W 12 Jose Luis Cruz
Favio Medina W 10 Gary Bergeron
Antwone Smith W 10 Richard Gutierrez
Mike Alvarado W 8 Juaquin Gallardo

Junior Welterweights

Manny Pacquiao KO 2 Ricky Hatton
(*Wins World Title*)
Alberto Mosquera W 11 William Gonzalez
Dmitriy Salita W 10 Raul Munoz
DeMarcus Corley KO 8 Sidney Siqueira
Lamont Peterson KO 7 Willy Blain
Sergey Fedchenko KO 7 Diego Ponce
Jorge Romero KO 6 Efren Guerrero
Brandon Rios KO 5 Oscar Meza
Devon Alexander KO 9 Jesus Rodriguez
Mark Melligen W 8 Ramon Montano

Lightweights

Urbano Antillon KO 5 Tyrone Harris
Czar Amonsot W 10 Morris Chule
Jorge Teron W 10 Aldo Valtierra
Vicente Escobedo KO 2 Kevin Kelley
John Molina KO 2 Frankie Archuleta
Daniel Estrada KO 1 Fernando Torres
Adrien Broner W 8 Fernando Quintero

Junior Lightweights

Humberto Soto KO 9 Benoit Gaudet
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Guillaume Frenois W 12 Jesus Simon
Rogers Mtagwa W 10 Ricardo Medina
Jackson Asiku KO 9 Gairy St. Clair
Anthony Marcial KO 8 Jaime Barcelona
Thomas Soa KO 7 Irvan Bone
Will Tomlinson KO 5 Matt Powell

Featherweights

Daniel Ponce De Leon W 12 Marlon Aguilar
Rafael Marquez KO 3 Jose Francisco Mendoza
Alejandra Oliveras W 10 Adriana Salles
Terdsak Jandaeng KO 2 Bogi Gonzales
Massimo Morra KO 8 Gianpiero Contestabile
Martin Lindsay KO 6 Paul Appleby
Jonathan Barros KO 5 Carlos Rodriguez
Marcel Japhta KO 4 Willie Mabasa
Gabriel Dorado KO 1 Alejandro Corrales
Charles Huerta W 8 Gregorio Torres
Bernabe Concepcion W 6 Yogli Herrera

Junior Featherweights

Celestino Caballero W 12 Jeffrey Mathebula
(*Retains WBA/IBF Titles*)
Toshiaki Nishioka KO 3 Jhonny Gonzalez
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 9 Rafael Hernandez
Rendall Munroe W 12 Isaac Nettey
Abner Mares KO 6 Jonathan Perez
Juan Manuel Lopez KO 9 Gerry Penalosa
Alejandro Perez KO 9 Adolfo Landeros
Al Seeger KO 8 Benjamin Flores
Genaro Camargo KO 4 Eduardo Avaca
Guillermo Rigondeaux KO 3 Juan Noriega
Antonio Escalante KO 3 Gary Stark

Bantamweights

Anselmo Moreno W 12 Wladimir Sidorenko
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Tabtimdaeng Na Rachawat W 12 Ariel Delgado
Yan Barthelemy W 10 Alexander Espinoza
Stephane Jamoye W 10 Pungluang Sor Singyu
Alvaro Perez W 10 Daniel Diaz
Rodolfo Garay KO 7 Jesus Cantu
A.J. Banal KO 2 Mbwana Matumla

Junior Bantamweights

Daiki Kameda W 10 Gabriel Pumar
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin KO 3 Wido Paez
Kohei Kono W 12 Daniel Ferreras
Marco Hernandez W 12 Roberto Lopez
Daniel Iannazzo W 10 Pichitchok Singmanassak
Mauricio Munoz W 10 Diego Loto
Rafael Gutierrez W 10 Ramon Leyte
Jose Salgado KO 8 Darwin Zamora
David Gaspar KO 6 Isaac Bustos

Flyweights

Denkaosan Kaovichit W 12 Hiroyuki Hisataka
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Daisuke Naito W 12 Xiong Zhao Zhong
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Julio Cesar Miranda
Sammy Gutierrez W 12 Job Solano
Brahim Asloum KO 3 Humberto Pool
Go Onaga D 10 Richard Garcia
Evert Briceno D 10 Reynaldo Cajina
Masafumi Okubo KO 7 Yuchi Eausampan

Junior Flyweights

Edren Dapudong KO 7 Bert Batawang
Farid Cassiani W 10 Nelson Cantero

Strawweights

Momo Koseki W 10 Nao Ikeyama
Carlos Perez KO 5 Jose Zuniga
Kwanthai Pattalung KO 4 Little Roseman

Chad Dawson W 12 Antonio Tarver

Las Vegas, Nevada: Every so often, a sequel is better than the original. But unlike movies such as *Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan* and *The Godfather, Part II*, the rematch between southpaws Dawson and Tarver failed to improve upon the first installment.

Once again, the rising Dawson, 175, comfortably outpointed a fading Tarver, 175, in a contractually obligated rematch at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino that produced few thrills. That was much to the chagrin of HBO, which paid a reported $3.2-million to air Dawson's first defense of the IBF light heavyweight belt he took from Tarver last October.

The 40-year-old Tarver, 27-6 (19), entered with a 3-0 record in rematches, having avenged losses to Eric Harding, Roy Jones, and Glen Johnson. He gave the 26-year-old Dawson, 28-0 (17), a bit tougher time and managed to land a few clean shots, but Dawson's speed and accuracy were again too much for the Tampa, Florida, resident.

Dawson, THE RING's number-two light heavyweight, coasted through large stretches of the fight, but did seem focused on making a statement in the early stages. He began to take control in the opening two rounds, when he repeatedly forced Tarver back with hard shots to the body. He also was warned by referee Robert Byrd (USA) for hitting after the second-round bell. Tarver, who entered ranked number four by THE RING, began the third aggressively and managed to trap the New Haven, Connecticut, native along the ropes, but Dawson quickly squirmed out and went back to outmaneuvering Tarver in the center of the ring.

Dawson was at his most aggressive during an entertaining fourth in which his combinations appeared to stun Tarver, who held on and bounced back to catch Dawson with a counter left in the final seconds of the round. Dawson continued to press in the fifth, and Tarver took advantage with a sharp left uppercut that landed flush but didn't seem to bother "Bad Chad."

Wearing down and discouraged by the resiliency of "The Magic Man," Dawson began conserving his energy by the latter half of the seventh, when he was briefly wobbled by a solid left upstairs. The next few rounds saw Dawson methodically dominate the first two minutes, only to have Tarver come on late and make the round close. Both men approached the 12th as if the fight were still up for grabs, and that led to some of the better exchanges of the night, though neither man threatened to score a knockdown as Dawson did in the final round of the first encounter.

American judges Duane Ford and Patricia Jarman each scored it 117-111, while Alan Davis (Canada) had it 116-112, all for Dawson. THE RING agreed with Ford and Jarman's tally. Tarver, predictably, thought he finished on top, though the CompuBox stats backed the opinion of the judges and virtually every observer: Tarver had a higher work rate, but landed just 16 percent of his shots (121 of 749), as opposed to 31 percent (209 of 677) for Dawson.

Dawson, who claimed afterward that he wasn't feeling well, has one bout left on his two-fight deal with HBO. The ideal matchup would be top-ranked Bernard Hopkins, which would be for the legit world championship, but with Hopkins' price too steep, Dawson might have to settle for former middleweight champ Jermain Taylor or a rematch with former 175-pound champ Glen Johnson.

Television: **HBO**
Promoters: **Gary Shaw Productions, AT Entertainment**
(5-9-09)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Dawson decisions Tarver in pointless rematch

Brian Viloria KO 11 Ulises Solis

Manila, Philippines: Although this fight card, dubbed "The Flash And The Furious," was billed as a double main event, Viloria found himself actually playing second fiddle to Nonito Donaire vs. Raul Martinez, which was officially the main event of the show. It wasn't surprising that this bout didn't close the card. Filipino fans had once taken quite warmly to Viloria,

a Filipino raised in Hawaii, but most felt he had lost his edge over the last few years. And they certainly expected he would have a difficult time finding it against one of the world's best junior flyweights in IBF titlist Solis.

Viloria came in riding a six-fight winning streak, but talk among fans was that Viloria had reached his peak 3½ years ago, when he knocked out Eric Ortiz in the first round to win the WBC light flyweight belt. After only one successful defense, he lost the title to Omar Nino with a disappointing performance in 2006, and failed to get that belt back in two subsequent attempts. Sure, he'd won five straight fights since. But he had yet to deliver a particularly impressive performance and fans were well within their rights to doubt him.

It seems all that persistent doubt and negativity were just the motivation that Viloria needed. Viloria, 28, was jacked up from the start. He came charging out at the opening bell, looking to make a quick statement. "The Hawaiian Punch" landed several flush combinations and appeared to have established complete control over Solis.

In the second round, Viloria, 108, started in with a whirling flurry and the Araneta Coliseum erupted as Solis, who was making his ninth title defense, was trapped against the ropes. Not all the punches landed, and when Viloria stepped back, he looked winded. Solis, 27, kept his composure and engaged in some steady business of his own and appeared to take the round.

Solis, 107, Guadalajara, Mexico, had a point deducted in the third round for a series of low blows, but overall he kept up the steady pace. As he would continue to do all night, Viloria landed some good, clean right hands. Solis soaked them up and continued to throw and land as well. The following round was more of the same, with both fighters clearly at the top of their games and ready and willing to engage in battle. It was obvious that this was going to be a fascinating grind to the finish.

Blood started trickling out of Solis' right eye in the fifth, and then the Mexican went downstairs two more times, prompting referee Bruce McTavish (Philippines) to deduct another point. While McTavish was taking the point away, Viloria banged his chest and urged the crowd to get loud. When the action resumed, Viloria went on the offensive and took the round, 10-8.

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Manny Pacquiao

If it seems like Manny Pacquiao gets named Fighter of the Month every time he fights … well, that's probably because he does.

When he dominated David Diaz for a lightweight belt in June '08, Pacquiao won Fighter of the Month. When he was every bit as dominant against Oscar De La Hoya in December '08, he won it again. And now he's a no-doubt-about-it choice after flattening Ricky Hatton in May to claim the legitimate junior welterweight championship of the world. Three fights, three Fighter of the Month awards.

The win over Hatton to make it three straight was probably the most impressive of the bunch, and certainly it was the most spectacular knockout ending Pacquiao has ever produced. It could be argued that a fighter of Hatton's caliber hasn't been iced so quickly and conclusively since Tommy Hearns blasted out Roberto Duran 25 years ago.

Maybe it's time to just ditch the "Fighter Of The Month" designation and re-name it "The Pacquiao Award." Of course, other fighters would still be entitled to win it—just so long as Pacquiao doesn't fight that month.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Viloria cracks Solis with a right in signature performance

In the sixth, Solis continued to grind it out and keep busy, and he landed some clean combinations. Viloria kept throwing the right with some success, but it appeared he was going for the one-punch knockout. Solis seemed to take the round.

Solis continued with his steady attack in the first half of the seventh round, but suddenly tired in the second half. Viloria landed flush with several combinations and was starting to look like the fresher of the two fighters. In the eighth, the action was give and take until Solis slightly staggered Viloria near the end to take the round.

The fight entered the final four scheduled rounds pretty much dead even, and it was clearly going to come down to sheer guts, desire, and conditioning. As it turned out, Viloria had the edge in those departments. He landed some hard combinations to the face of Solis, 28-2-2 (20), and was getting his second wind and looked to be enjoying himself. He took the ninth and 10th rounds and needed the 11th to put the fight out of reach.

He put it out of reach and then some. Viloria smashed Solis on the chin with as perfect a right hand as you'll ever see, and Solis crumbled forward to the canvas, banging his head as he went down. McTavish reached the count of 10, and the celebrations for Team Viloria and his suddenly believing fans began.

In the press room afterward, an elated Viloria, 25-2 (15) with 2 no-contests, chalked up his sensational victory to the grinding 14 weeks of preparation.

"My conditioning was in no doubt," Viloria said. "One of the best conditionings of my career—the way we trained, in the mountains, at the beaches, running every day. We really emphasized conditioning. My skills are there. It was just me having the fuel and the gas to last through 12 rounds to help me fuel my skills."

Promoter Bob Arum declared that he wants Viloria to fight Puerto Rico's Ivan Calderon in Manila in November. That bout would be for THE RING junior flyweight championship held by Calderon.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(4-19-09)
Ted Lerner

Nonito Donaire KO 4
Raul Martinez

Manila, Philippines: Making his first ring appearance in his native Philippines since 2002, IBF flyweight titlist Donaire appeared to have a stiff challenge in front of him. Mexican-American Raul Martinez came into the fight having never lost in 24 outings. At the weigh-in the day before the fight, Martinez looked positively buff, while Donaire, who had said he was having some trouble getting down to the flyweight limit, appeared gaunt.

Because this show was broadcast back to the United States, it took place at 10 a.m. Sunday morning in Manila. In the weeks leading up to the fight, the pressure was clearly on Donaire, as many fans felt his career was getting away from him due to his lack of big fights since his upset knockout of Vic Darchinyan in 2007. Come fight time, the pressure had multiplied because Donaire's fight came on the heels of a brilliant performance by Brian Viloria just minutes before.

As it turned out, the pressure, and specifically the big-time atmosphere at the famed Araneta Coliseum, got the better of Martinez, not Donaire. As the 27-year-old challenger walked out of his dressing room and into the arena, he had the look of a very worried man. He admitted afterward that this was the biggest fight he'd ever fought and that the raucous vibe inside the arena had gotten to him even before he stepped into the ring.

Once inside the ring, things only got worse for the native of San Antonio, Texas. Donaire, 111½, San Leandro, California, via Talibon, Philippines, came out in the first round guns blazing, knocking down a nervous and stiff Martinez twice. The 26-year-old Donaire dished out more brutal punishment in the second, firing off quick punches from every conceivable angle and flooring Martinez, 112, with the same short, hard left hook that he fed to Darchinyan in July '07.

The pace slowed in the third, but Donaire, who was making his third title defense, continued to showcase his impressive arsenal. In the fourth, Donaire finished it off with a brutal uppercut that sent Martinez, 24-1 (14), down to the canvas. Referee Pete Podgorski (USA) immediately waved off the bout without a count, and Martinez quickly jumped up and protested. His protest didn't last long, however, as he came to accept that he was thoroughly outclassed and had been spared further punishment.

Afterward, Donaire, 21-1 (14), said he would probably move up to either junior bantamweight or bantamweight. In the press-

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Donaire watches Martinez head to the canvas

room, his promoter, Bob Arum, pooh-poohed any thought of a rematch with Darchinyan and said he'd like Donaire to fight the winner of the Fernando Montiel-Eric Morel 118-pound fight.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(4-19-09)
Ted Lerner

Celestino Caballero W 12 Jeffrey Mathebula

Panama City, Panama: For Caballero's seventh defense of the WBA 122-pound title and first defense of the IBF belt that he won from Steve Molitor last November, the location was important on a couple of fronts. The mandatory defense was originally supposed to take place in Florida and be televised on Showtime, but the Panamanian government put up extra money to bring the fight to the new Roberto Duran Arena. This meant that the bout would no longer be on U.S. television. But it also meant that the bout wouldn't be on neutral turf, which certainly didn't hurt Caballero's chances of winning a decision in what turned out to be a surprisingly close fight.

Caballero, 121¼, Panama City, started well, winning four of the first five rounds. But the talented "Pelenchin" didn't have the comfort he usually has of controlling the bout from range whenever he chooses to do so. At 5'11", Caballero normally dwarfs his opponents, but the 5'10" Mathebula, 120, Brakpan, South Africa, was able to look him eye to eye and go more or less jab for jab.

It's been widely rumored that the 32-year-old Caballero has been struggling to make the 122-pound limit, and if that's true, it would explain why he tired after the fifth round. The 29-year-old Mathebula worked his way back into the fight while Caballero had few answers, particularly for the challenger's crisp jab. Mathebula, 22-2-2 (12), consistently beat Caballero to the punch, but couldn't knock him down or hurt him badly, and at the end of 12, it seemed the fight could go either way.

Not surprisingly, the Panamanian judge, Hector Afu, scored it 116-112 for Caballero, and the South African judge, Deon Dwarte, had it 116-112 for Mathebula. The tiebreaker was Patricia Morse Jarman (USA), who saw it 116-112 for Caballero.

Though there are some intriguing opponents for Caballero, 32-2 (22), at junior featherweight, such as RING champion Israel Vazquez, Rafael Marquez, and Juan Manuel Lopez, his team is reportedly looking into a move up to featherweight. A showdown with undefeated Cuban Yuriorkis Gamboa is a possibility for HBO or Showtime later in the year.

Promoter: **Promociones y Eventos del Istmo**
(4-30-09)

Felix Sturm KO 7 Koji Sato

Krefeld, Germany: World-class Japanese middleweights have been something of an oxymoron in boxing, and Sato, 159½, Tokyo, Japan, proved no exception, succumbing in a predictably straightforward manner to Sturm, 159, Leverkusen, Germany, before a crowd of 9,000 fans at Konig Palast. It was the sixth defense of Sturm's second reign as WBA middleweight titleholder (and he previously held the WBO version).

When he appeared to outfight an out-of-shape Oscar De La Hoya five years ago in Las Vegas, coming out on the wrong end of a highly controversial decision, Sturm seemed to have the tools to become a major player in the middleweight division. But the reluctance of his promoter, Peter Kohl, and Wilfried Sauerland, who promotes IBF titleholder Arthur Abraham, to make a match between two of German boxing's biggest stars has left his career disappointingly stagnant. A stoppage defeat against Javier Castillejo in 2006 showed that Sturm might not be as good as his strong effort against De La Hoya suggested in any case, but his talent and technique ought to be more appreciated on the international stage than they are.

Sato, 14-1 (13), has a deep appreciation of Sturm's ability now. A Japanese amateur champion, he boxed in the 2004 Asian Olympic qualifying tournament in Pakistan and reached the semifinals before being stopped by a Thai. He made his pro debut in Las Vegas, beating his outclassed opponent in 56 seconds, but all of his subsequent bouts before he ventured to Germany had taken place in Japan against mostly substandard opposition. His kayo percentage was the only element that elevated him into position to challenge Sturm.

The gulf in class was apparent from the outset. Sato, as is his custom, tried to bull his way in and overwhelm Sturm with his strength, but the 30-year-old German was far too clever and sharp to fall victim to his crude tactics. Sturm's jab speared into

PHOTO BY JUERGEN SCHWARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sturm had an easy night against mismatched Sato

Sato's face and his combination punching had a progressively wearing effect. To his credit, the challenger refused to yield, even when the futility of his game plan became apparent.

By the seventh round, Sato, 28, was merely surviving on Sturm's whim, and as soon as Sturm made a sustained effort to finish the fight, Puerto Rican referee Luis Pabon intervened at the 2:46 mark. "He was very strong," Sato said of Sturm, 32-2-1 (14). "It's the result that was expected and I feel sorry for the people who have supported me. It is not easy to get a chance in this weight class, so I am grateful I was able to fight in this match. Now I will have a rest and consider my future."

Promoter: **Universum Box**
(4-25-09)
Brian Doogan

Karoly Balzsay KO II Maselino Masoe

Krefeld, Germany: This was as predictable as title bouts get. Having seen better days, Masoe, 167, South Auckland, New Zealand, via Western Samoa, took his licks before he crumbled in the penultimate round, as much from the steady beating applied from the outset by Balzsay, 167¼, Hamburg, Germany, via Kecskemet, Hungary, as from the effect of his final assault at Konig Palast.

Masoe, 29-6 (27), won the vacant WBA middleweight title in 2004 with a second-round stoppage of Evans Ashira, and in his only defense two years later he lost the belt to Felix Sturm (who headlined this same card against Koji Sato). A fourth-round stoppage by South African journeyman William Gare in 2008 did not augur well for his prospects as a super middleweight and, at 42 years old, he could consider himself fortunate to have been maneuvered into a title challenge. This was the 29-year-old Balzsay's first defense after his points victory over Denis Inkin in January and it was a straightforward exercise.

Masoe's aggression lasted only through the first half-minute or so of each round. Thereafter, Balzsay, 21-0 (15), who at 6' was four inches taller than Masoe, dominated the exchanges with his southpaw jab, quick and accurate punches, and superior movement. From early in the fight, Masoe struggled to evade Balzsay's jab and straight left and he was frequently caught on the ropes where he was a hapless target for Balzsay's combinations.

It appeared that the challenger's durability would see him last the distance, but he went down near end of the 11th round from a straight left-right hook combination and, although he beat American referee Mark Nelson's count, he made it clear that he did not wish to continue by turning away and putting his left hand on the ropes in token surrender. The referee waved it over at 2:07 of round 11.

Balzsay is scheduled to face Germany-based Russian Robert Stieglitz in August.

Promoter: **Universum Box**
(4-25-09)
Brian Doogan

Cory Spinks W 12 DeAndre Latimore

St. Louis, Missouri: Youth is a wonderful attribute to have on your side. But sometimes the wisdom that comes with being a bit older proves to be a more important quality to possess. That was certainly the case in Spinks' surprisingly entertaining bout with the eight-years-younger Latimore at the Scottrade Center in the hometown of both world-class junior middleweights. Early on, it looked like youth would prevail, but Spinks used guts and savvy to dig his way out of an early hole and capture a split decision and the vacant IBF trinket.

The southpaw vs. southpaw fight began horribly for the 31-year-old Spinks, 152¾, as the 23-year-old Latimore, 153½, rocked him with a left hand and knocked him down in the opening round. Referee Earl Morton (USA) administered the eight-count and Spinks seemed steady when he returned to the fray, but he continued to soak up punches the rest of that round and during round two. It appeared as if Spinks, a former RING welterweight champ who'd lost two straight split decisions and hadn't fought in 13 months, was perhaps hitting the wall as a fighter and was going to be disposed of quickly by the up-and-coming Latimore, who was coming off an impressive knockout of Sechew Powell in June '08.

But Spinks began to turn the fight around in the third. He knew he had to do something different, so instead of being his usual defensive self, he stood and traded and forced a fast pace. He consistently made Latimore miss, and as

a result, the younger man was growing tired by the middle rounds. The crowd, which had cheered for Latimore and booed Spinks when they'd made their way to the ring, switched allegiances and was chanting "Cor-y! Cor-y!" midway through the fight.

But Latimore gained a second wind in the ninth round and kept his momentum through the 11th. Heading into round 12, the fight was arguably dead even. And it was the older man, Spinks, 37-5 (11), who had the far better final round, fighting with energy and landing crisp shots while Latimore, 19-2 (16), barely had the gas to move his hands.

Appropriately, all three judges saw a close fight. Adalaide Byrd (USA) scored it 115-112 for Spinks, while Jerry Jakubco (USA) had the same score for Latimore. The tiebreaker was Steve Weisfeld (USA), who saw it 114-113 for Spinks, the same as THE RING.

Television: **Showtime**

Promoters: **Don King Productions, DiBella Entertainment, Rumble Time Promotions**

(4-24-09)

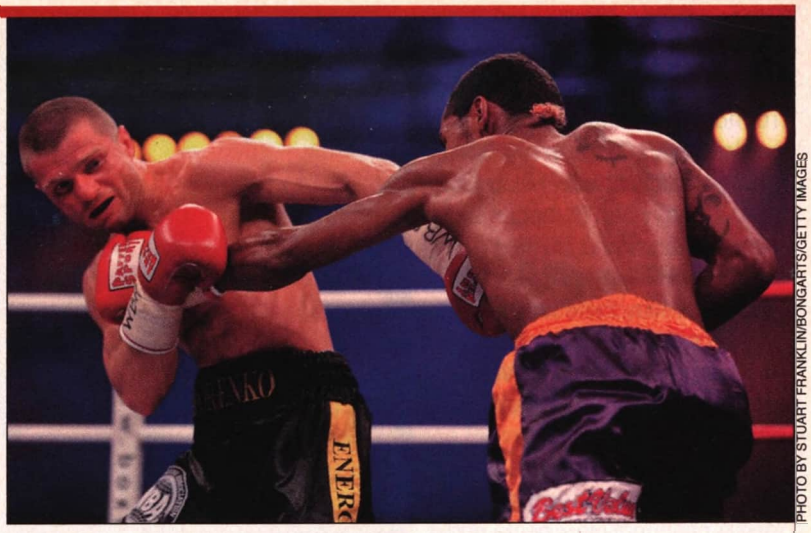

PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Sidorenko just couldn't get past Moreno's long left

Anselmo Moreno W 12 Wladimir Sidorenko

Bremen, Germany: Having seized the WBA bantamweight title from Sidorenko a year ago, Moreno emphasized his superiority with a rematch points victory at Halle 7, and it was more clear-cut than the judges' split decision might suggest.

The keys to Moreno's success in their first meeting were the clever use he made of his southpaw jab, his good lateral movement, and his counterpunching that controlled the opening rounds in a competitive, quick-paced encounter. In the rematch, Moreno, 117½, San Miguelito, Panama, utilized these qualities again and, while Sidorenko, 117¾, Hamburg, Germany, via Energodar, Ukraine, continually tried to bull his way inside to land short, damaging blows, Moreno, making his third defense, controlled most of the exchanges again. Not even the Ukrainian's formidable fitness and pressure tactics could secure a foothold for him against the tall, rangy titleholder.

Sidorenko, 32, had not fought in the 12 months since their initial clash and the feeling of déjà vu as he found himself on the end of Moreno's jab again in the opening round must have instilled fresh doubt in his mind as to whether he was up to this challenge. The 23-year-old Panamanian picked him off almost with impunity and his lateral movement frustrated Sidorenko's efforts from the outset.

By the second round, the former titleholder was rushing in crudely to try to get in range, but he paid a price each time as Moreno's jab beat out the rhythm of the fight. Sidorenko, quite simply, could not find a way past Moreno's long reach and accurate punching. It was not that he was being severely damaged; rather, he was being clearly outscored and frustrated. His right eye began to swell as a result of Moreno connecting so frequently and blood began to ooze from the area in the ninth round. When Sidorenko, 21-2-2 (7), did retaliate, Moreno, 25-1-1 (8), took his punches well, but even down the stretch the Ukrainian was unable to penetrate his foe's guard with anything like the frequency or force that he required.

Judges Glenn Feldman (USA) and Mikael Hook (Finland) scored 115-113 for Moreno, while Manuel Maritxalar (Spain) saw it 115-113 for Sidorenko. THE RING did not see it as close as the judges, scoring 116-112 for Moreno. The referee was Benjy Esteves (USA). As of press time, Moreno was expected to defend against former titleholder Mahyar Monshipour on July 4.

Promoter: **Universum Box**

(5-2-09)

Brian Doogan

Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 10 Jose Rojas

Primm, Nevada: The belt that Gamboa won at Buffalo Bill's Star Arena by defeating the unworthy Rojas was utterly insignificant. But the way Gamboa went about winning the fight was not. A flashy speedster known for getting reckless, suffering knockdowns, and scoring highlight-reel kayos, the 27-year-old Cuban was instead patient, mature, and arguably rather boring as he gradually took Rojas apart en route to a stoppage in the 10th.

With the win, Gamboa, 125½, Miami, Florida, via Guantanamo, Cuba, claimed the vacant interim WBA featherweight title. Since Chris John holds the non-interim WBA title and has been plenty active in defending it, it's impossible to take this belt seriously. Even Gamboa said before the fight that he wouldn't consider himself a champion by beating Rojas.

Nor should he, since the southpaw Rojas, 125, Caracas, Venezuela, wasn't a real contender by anyone's standards except the alphabet bodies. The 37-year-old lost a lopsided decision to John in 2007, fought once in 2008 and defeated an opponent with a record of 1-9-1, and was inactive for 13 months heading into this fight. He simply wasn't a realistic threat to derail the undefeated Gamboa's rise.

Gamboa was patient but punishing. Two right hands in the first round made Rojas' legs stiffen momentarily. Gamboa didn't leap in or get wild—at least not until the third round, when he began dropping his hands and blasting away, much to the dismay of his corner. Luckily for him, there wasn't much Rojas could do to take advantage of the openings, and the Venezuelan's right eye was swelling by round's end.

In round five, Gamboa landed something in between a punch and a push to Rojas' neck, and it knocked him off-balance and down to the canvas. Ref Russell Mora (USA) ruled it a knockdown, and Rojas was up quickly. In the sixth, it seemed Gamboa was looking for the finish, but Rojas, 25-7-1 (17) with 1 no-contest, was tough and crafty and actually landed the round's best punch, a long, clean left. Unfortunately for the underdog, it was the last effective punch he would land. Gamboa carefully picked his spots, kept scoring, and had Rojas' right eye closed by the end of the ninth. Rojas' corner sent him out for round 10, but after 91 seconds more, Gamboa had the one-eyed fighter trapped on the ropes and Mora halted the bout.

Next up for Gamboa is a July 25 bout in Mexico against veteran Guty Espadas, who has won seven straight but rates to be in over his head against such a dynamic athlete.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Roy Englebrecht Events**
(4-17-09)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Katsidis rips Chavez with a left hook

Michael Katsidis KO 8 Jesus Chavez

Austin, Texas: Chavez must have been inspired by performing in front of a hometown crowd, for he was on even terms with favored Aussie Katsidis during the first two rounds of their bout at the Frank Erwin Center. But at the end of the third, Katsidis landed a hard right hand that turned the tide of the fight. It was as if Katsidis needed a few rounds to realize he was the bigger, stronger, younger man. The fight was part of "Lightweight Lightning," a pay-per-view that could've been dubbed "Young Guys Whipping On Old Guys."

From the fourth round on, the 28-year-old Katsidis controlled the bout with his youthful aggression. Chavez still had moments, especially early in the fifth when he pasted Katsidis with three consecutive rights to the face, but Katsidis absorbed the blows and kept coming.

As if Chavez didn't have enough problems dealing with Katsidis' barroom style, an apparent clash of heads in the fourth opened a gash on his scalp. The blood sprayed ringsiders every time Katsidis landed a blow to Chavez' head or face, and also leaked into Chavez' eyes. "He couldn't see the punches coming after that butt," said Chavez' adviser Richard Lord. Moments before the bell ended the seventh, Katsidis landed another flush right that seemed to take Chavez' spirit. The fight was as good as over.

The 36-year-old Chavez, 136, returned to his corner looking dejected. Referee Jon Schorle (USA) visited Chavez between rounds and was told the fight was over. Katsidis, 135, was officially awarded an eighth-round TKO because the bell had sounded to start round eight before the fight was waved over.

"I have to realize eras are changing," said Chavez 44-5 (30). "I said if I lost that this would be my last fight. Now I have to be a man of my word."

Katsidis, 25-2 (21), now living in Pattaya, Thailand, put himself back into the lightweight picture with the win. After losing two in a row, he's now won two in a row. He was penciled in as a possible opponent for Ricky Hatton this winter, but Hatton's future looks cloudy and that bout is in doubt. Katsidis is also seeking a rematch with Joel Casamayor, who handed him one of his two losses. Regardless of the opponent, Katsidis almost guarantees a good brawl.

"That's what I aim for. I want people to remember my fights," said Katsidis. "It's what made me famous."

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(4-4-09)

Vicente Escobedo W 10 Carlos Hernandez

Austin, Texas: If "Famoso" Hernandez sticks to his word and retires, he certainly gave fans a memorable farewell performance. By going 10 hard rounds with the much younger

Escobedo as part of the "Lightweight Lightning" pay-per-view event, Hernandez was not only gallant in defeat, he also helped create one of the better fights of 2009.

Things didn't start out well for Hernandez. The 27-year-old Escobedo, 134¼, Woodland, California, seemed too fast and sharp for the 38-year-old veteran, dropping him in the first round. When Hernandez, 135½, West Covina, California, was felled again in the second, there was a sense that Famoso was playing a role in one of boxing's sad traditions, that of the aging warhorse being stopped by a young contender. But during the torrid third round, Hernandez found his footing. Fighting his way inside, he rattled Escobedo and put the Frank Erwin Center on notice that this fight's outcome was not a done deal.

Using nothing but willpower, Hernandez spent the middle rounds applying as much relentless pressure as his old legs would allow. Hernandez even scored a controversial knockdown in the sixth, stepping on Escobedo's foot and knocking him to the canvas. But while Hernandez was catching up on the scorecards, he was being raked by Escobedo's counterpunches. By the eighth round, Hernandez' right eye was closing, and his left eyebrow was torn open. Escobedo, 20-1(12), seemed just as exhausted as his older, bloodied opponent, but the bout's momentum was about to change again. As Hernandez' energy flagged, Escobedo rallied.

The fighters embraced at the beginning of the 10th. The hug was initiated by Hernandez, who, perhaps tasting his final breaths as a professional fighter, went out swinging. Unfortunately, Hernandez didn't get a storybook finish. American Judges Perry Hillin, Levi Martinez, and Chet Robins scored the bout 96-91, 94-93, and 95-91, respectively, for Escobedo. The referee was Ruben Carrion (USA).

It was Hernandez' fifth loss in his last eight fights, bringing his record to 43-8-1 (24). "It could be my last fight," Hernandez said. "If it is, everyone will know that I went out with my head held high. I'm proud of my career. I was a guy who didn't have the most skill, but I had a lot of heart."

Every ounce of that heart was on display in Austin.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(4-4-09)

Juan Manuel Lopez KO 9 Gerry Penalosa

Bayamon, Puerto Rico: A roar suddenly broke out among the portion of the sellout crowd that remained at the Coliseo Ruben Rodriguez. The fact that they were applauding the just-defeated challenger from the Philippines was testament to the incredible amount of courage Penalosa displayed against the local favorite Lopez.

In his third defense of the WBO junior featherweight bauble, Lopez, 121½, Caguas, Puerto Rico, saw his three-fight streak of first-round knockouts snapped. But he still dished out a steady beating to rock-jawed Penalosa, 121¾, until Penalosa trainer Freddie Roach stopped it heading into the 10th round. It marked the first time the 36-year-old Manila native had been stopped in his 20-year career.

Lopez, 25-0 (23), was just too strong and too sharp for the smaller Penalosa, 54-7-2 (34), who moved up from bantamweight, where he was rated number six by THE RING. Dominating from the opening round, "Juanma" was busy and aggressive, but under control.

Roach wanted his fighter to box the 5'7" Lopez and attack from angles, but the 5'4" Penalosa opted instead to stay in the pocket and slug it out with the fellow southpaw, possibly hoping the 25-year-old would wear himself out and begin making mistakes in the later rounds. Penalosa landed frequent counter right hooks, but they weren't hard enough to make Lopez stop throwing punches.

Lopez' punch stats had the CompuBox folks in a frenzy. He set a 122-pound CompuBox record in the sixth round with 123 powerpunches thrown and 71 powerpunch connects. Lopez broke both of those marks in the eighth by landing 84 of 129 powerpunches. He finished with a ridiculous 1,020 total punches thrown over nine rounds, 444 of which landed (44 percent), including 421 of 863 powershots.

Penalosa spent most of the fight trying to weather Lopez' constant storm, and as a result threw just 392 total punches. He was bruised under his left eye by the end of the first round, and by the time Roach stopped it, Penalosa's face was thoroughly swollen.

After the eighth, a round in which Penalosa landed a crisp counter right off the ropes midway

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Hernandez (right) gave everything he had, but it wasn't enough

which Penalosa landed a crisp counter right off the ropes midway through and then another counter right to the chin 10 seconds before the bell, Roach told his fighter that he would stop the bout if Penalosa didn't score a knockout in the ninth. Lopez' pace did seem to slow a bit, but Juanma finished with a big three-punch combo, then a right hand that momentarily rattled Penalosa. The two traded in the final 10 seconds.

THE RING had Lopez winning every round at the time of the stoppage. Roach admitted in the ring afterward that he would have thrown in the towel earlier if it were a different fighter taking the beating, but he thought Penalosa might be able to rally late. It didn't happen. "He was just too strong," Roach said. "It was very difficult for me to stop the fight, but he was just taking too much punishment."

It was another impressive performance for the rising Lopez, who is ranked third at junior featherweight by THE RING. He said afterward that he wanted to land a fight with world champ Israel Vazquez or top contender Rafael Marquez by the end of the year, and then move up to 126.

"We're ready for big challenges," Lopez said. "The company [Top Rank] will decide."

The referee was Jose Hiram Rivera (Puerto Rico).

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(4-25-09)

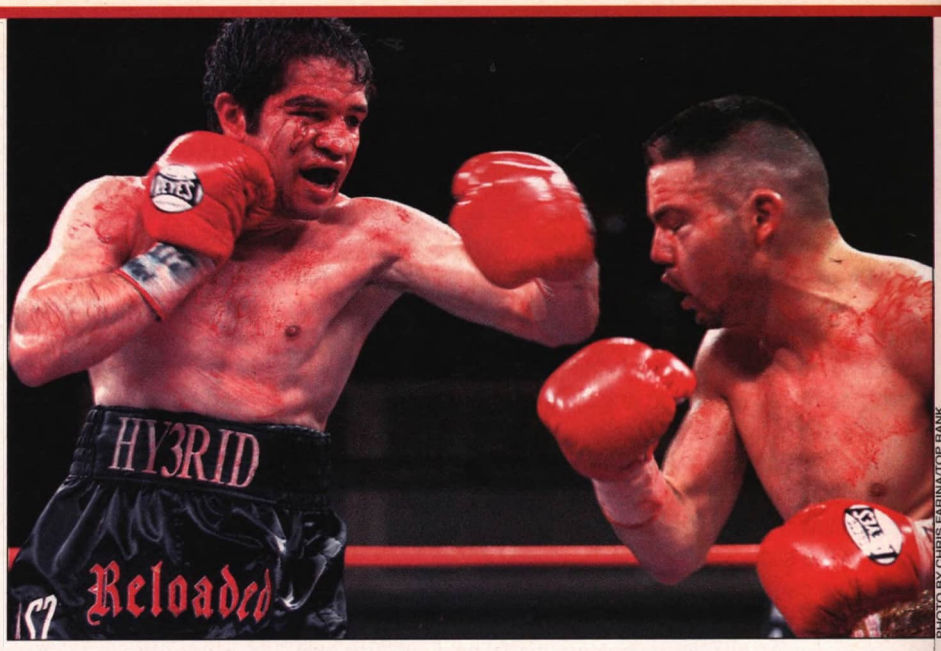

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Gomez overcomes horrendous cuts to stop Buendia

Alfonso Gomez KO 8 Juan Buendia

Las Vegas, Nevada: For a couple of guys who had been out of action for more than a year, Gomez and Buendia wasted no time getting down to serious business at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Their corner crews barely had time to descend the ring steps before a brutal slugfest erupted.

Buendia, making his first start since losing a decision to Jesus Soto Karras in November 2007, marched straight at Gomez and unloaded a series of heavy right hands to the head and body, augmented by an occasional hook. Gomez, who had not fought since Miguel Cotto stopped him in April 2008, soaked up quite a bit of punishment, but by the end of the round was answering back with blistering combinations of his own.

Gomez, 149, Guadalajara, Mexico, tried to box and counter, but was only partially successful, as Buendia's non-stop pressure and Gomez' brawling instincts frequently resulted in the former *Contender* star standing his ground and trading shot for shot. Buendia, 148½, Detroit, Michigan, didn't even try to box; he just shuffled steadily forward, caveman style, giving and taking hard blows every round.

Buendia, 28, was cut over the right eye by an accidental clash of heads in the fourth and returned the compliment in the fifth, butting open a far more serious-looking gash over Gomez' right eye. There was another headbutt by Buendia in the sixth, and although referee Robert Byrd (USA) gave Gomez a brief timeout to recover, he did not penalize the perpetrator.

With both men covered in gore and winging punches with all their might, the relentless give-and-take struggle took on an air of desperation. Ringsiders, including the round-card girls, were splattered with the blood that flew from both men as punch after punch crashed into their battered faces.

Who was winning the bloodbath depended on whether you preferred Buendia's heavier, thudding punches or Gomez' classier, crisper deliveries. But either way, there wasn't much between them when, in the eighth round, the 28-year-old Gomez planted his feet and buried a perfect left hook deep into Buendia's right side. As is often the case with such debilitating bodyblows, there was a sight delay before Buendia grimaced in agony and crumpled to the floor.

It was a bit of a surprise when Buendia, 14-3-1 (8), managed to haul himself erect just in time to beat the count, but after a few more digs to the midsection sent him down again shortly afterward, referee Byrd stopped the fight at the 1:07 mark of the round.

The hard-earned victory raised Gomez' record to 19-5-2 (9), but the deep laceration and the punishing nature of his comeback win will probably necessitate another lengthy layoff.

Television: **Azteca America**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(5-1-09)
Nigel Collins

Urbano Antillon KO 5 Tyrone Harris

Las Vegas, Nevada: In the nominal main event on the Gomez-Buendia card at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Antil-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Antillon was too strong for Harris

lon stayed undefeated and on track for an alphabet title shot by tallying a fifth-round TKO of Harris.

Harris, 135, Lansing, Michigan, had the moves and hand speed to offset Antillon's grinding body attack, but lacked the firepower and toughness to spring an upset. He took the first round on THE RING scorecard, displaying intelligent lateral movement and the ability to counter in combinations, but Antillon, 135, was unfazed by Harris' offerings and kept plodding forward.

Antillon, originally from Namiquipa, Mexico, but now fighting out of Maywood, California, walked through Harris' punches and kept up a steady if unspectacular assault on his opponent's midsection. After his promising start in the opening round, Harris' punch output decreased every round, and by the start of the fifth, Antillon's body barrage seemed to have sapped him of his strength and willpower.

A series of well-placed bodyshots twice floored Harris, 23-5 (15), in the fifth, and after the second knockdown referee Tony Weeks (USA) stopped what had become a one-sided fight at the 2:23 mark.

Antillon, 26-0 (19), won the NABF junior lightweight title in September 2008, and is ranked number seven in that division by THE RING, but fought his two most recent bouts at lightweight, where he has somehow rocketed to the number-one position in the always peculiar WBC rankings.

Television: **Azteca America**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(5-1-09)
Nigel Collins

Allan Green KO 2 Carlos DeLeon Jr.

Mashantucket, Connecticut: In the chief support to Carl Froch's dramatic stoppage of Jermain Taylor for the WBC super middleweight title, Green, 168, Tulsa, Oklahoma, suggested that he may too become a significant factor in the division. Green put on an explosive demonstration of power punching to overwhelm DeLeon, 168, Las Vegas, Nevada, via Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico, in two rounds at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods.

Having lost on points against Edison Miranda in 2007, Green's progress had stalled, but four subsequent wins, three by stoppage, put him into fringe contention for a title shot provided he could get past DeLeon. The son of former cruiserweight titleholder Carlos DeLeon, the American-based Puerto Rican had lost momentum himself with a stoppage defeat at the hands of Fernando Zuniga in 2008. This was a genuine crossroads fight and Green seized his opportunity.

Establishing his jab in the first round, he was able to control the exchanges until DeLeon landed a double left hook to the body and head just before the bell. DeLeon, 21-3-2 (14), began the second round well, too, jabbing to Green's midriff and looking for areas on which to land his double left hook. But Green, 28-1 (20), was sizing up his target and he unloaded violently and conclusively with a right hand and a left hook to the jaw that floored his opponent. DeLeon, 30, got back to his feet, but he was clearly in trouble and a followup assault quickly put him down again. Bravely, he returned to the fray, but his legs were gone and he tumbled twice more before referee Joey Lupino (USA) waved it over at the 1:54 mark.

Lucian Bute, the IBF super middleweight titleholder, was at ringside, and negotiations for Bute-Green were quickly underway. As of press time, however, those negotiations appeared to be fizzling. "I know I have the boxing ability and the power to dismantle every fighter in this division," said the 29-year-old Green. "I want to challenge for a title and prove to everyone that I'm the real deal."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoters: **DiBella Entertainment, Mick Hennessy**
(4-25-09)
Brian Doogan ■

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 (Continued from Page 26)

The other option for Lemieux was to knock out grown men for pay.

For Lemieux, the choice was a no-brainer. Since childhood, his dream had been to win a professional title and both fighter and trainer agreed his aggressive, hammer-fisted style was best tailored to fighting professionally rather than the busy, tap-and-run delivery of amateur competition.

As Anber explained, he always believed Lemieux's all-out offensive approach was worthy of boxing's old school culture in the 1930s and '40s, when young men decidedly took up the sport as a trade and learned as much through actively fighting as they did working in the gym. It was agreed the blueprint for Lemieux would include numerous fights over the next several years, patiently allowing him to mature personally and professionally, before an assault at the world-class level.

"We did a lot of things differently with David, not only from the perspective of moving him," said Anber. "You'll notice David wears short trunks, similar to what old-style fighters used to wear. He fights with brown gloves, just like the old-school fighters; he wears a long robe like the old-school fighters. His approach to training is also old school. It's a hard-nosed, gym-rat approach to boxing. And it is the same way we are developing his career. I'd love, by the time he is 23 years old, for him to have a record of 40 or 50 and 0, like a real old-school fighter."

Yvon Michel, general manger of Montreal-based promotional outfit Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM), approved of the strategy to Lemieux's career path and signed the fighter to a long-term contract. One of the perks for Lemieux has been access to world-class sparring in GYM's stable, including talents such as Joachin Alcine and Jean Pascal. Stories have also circulated that recent sparring sessions saw Lemieux getting the better of super middleweight contender Librado Andrade, who now trains in Montreal.

Michel has since featured Lemieux on a number of major cards that have helped to spread Lemieux's reputation as a kayo artist among Francophones. Still, despite his burgeoning popularity, Michel has opted not to headline Lemieux until late-2009.

"We agreed that we were going to give him the experience in the pros that he didn't get in the amateurs," said Michel. "Next year we want him to dominate Canada. But we don't want him to be fighting for a title at 21-22 years old. If you look at guys like Fernando Vargas, Wilfred Benitez, Pipino Cuevas, when they win the title young, they finish young. When you win a title, you should be able to defend it and stay champion for a while."

Canada's Fightnews.ca editor Dave Spencer agrees that Lemieux is potentially championship material, but is surprised at the level of patience the notoriously demanding Quebec boxing fans have shown.

"They expect you to be fighting for a North American title by 15 fights and for a world title after 20 fights," said Spencer. "Lemieux's handlers are only thinking about his development right now, and it's a concept that makes sense. But what makes sense and what happens are sometimes two different things."

As for Lemieux, he remains disaffected for a young man in such a tough game. He lives a normal life with his parents and an older brother and younger sister in the Cartierville section of Montreal. Like any typical young man his age, he parties with friends and dates girls. But when it comes time to prepare for a fight, he leaves it all behind and gives full commitment to Anber and the gym.

"I can't do the same things my friends do," said Lemieux. "I have to hold back. I sacrifice a lot for boxing. Sometimes I tell my friends: 'Sorry, guys I can't go out. I have a fight coming up.' I can't be seen in clubs, stuff like that. I have to stay focused. Sometimes it's hard, but it's worth it. I am a professional."

In the end, he knows that it's the sacrifices that make it all look easy, and the day will come when all the lingering questions by skeptics and doubters about his stamina and chin will be answered. But he is unusually self-possessed for his age and is clear about what he wants when asked about his dreams.

"It's not a dream, it is a goal, really, because I am doing it," said Lemieux. "I want to be a respected as a great fighter and win world championships. But I don't' want to stop there. I want to defend my titles and be undefeated as long as I can."

Lofty goals. But the good news is that David Lemieux doesn't need to be in a rush. The kid has plenty of time to get there—and the punch to get the job done. ■

Paul Salgado is The Ring's Canada correspondent.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

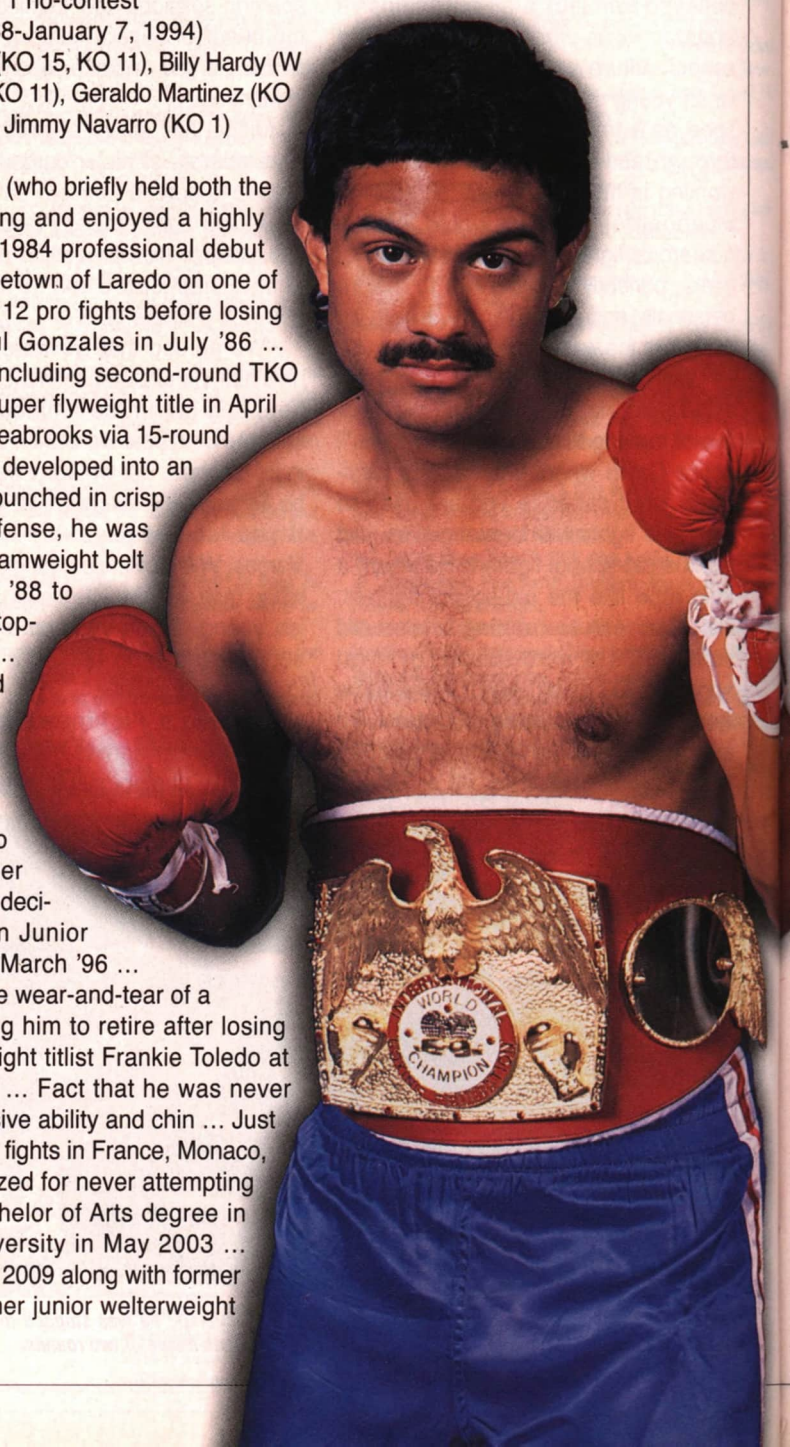
Rodney Green lasted the longest of any of Lemieux's opponents; he was stopped in the fourth round. The Canadian slugger has finished 13 of his 15 pro foes inside of two rounds.

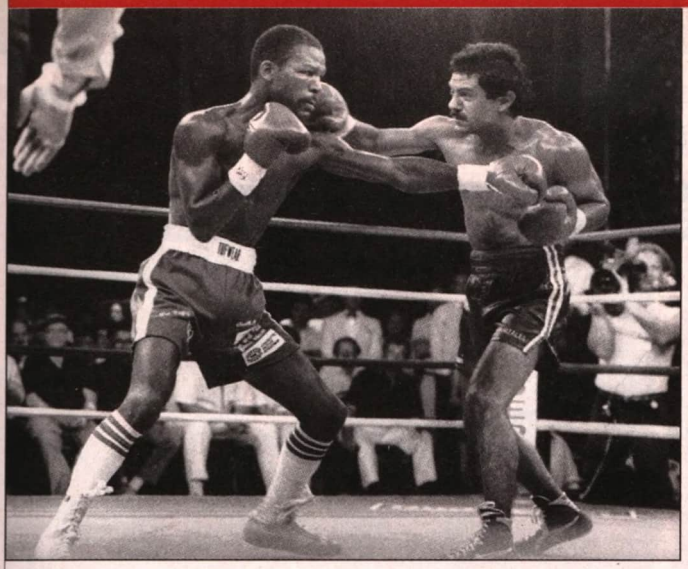
Hall of Fame Profile

THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Orlando Canizales

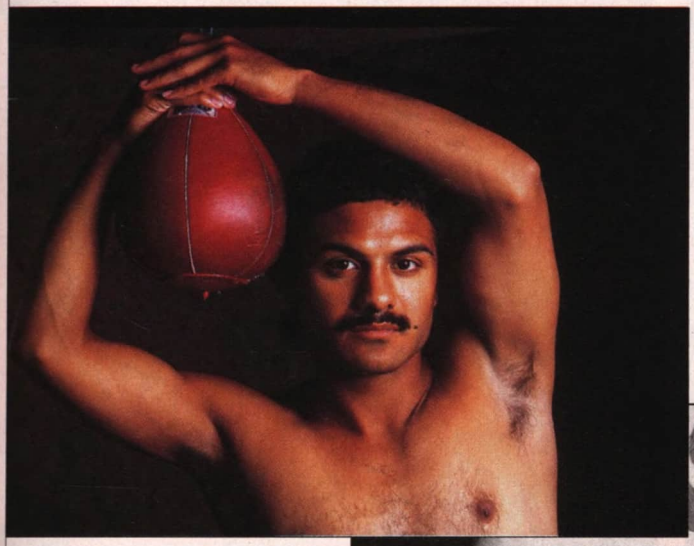
Birthdate: November 25, 1965
Birthplace: Laredo, Texas
Weight Classes: Flyweight through junior lightweight
Professional Record: 50-5-1 (37) with 1 no-contest
Title Held: IBF Bantamweight (July 9, 1988-January 7, 1994)
Best Performances: Kelvin Seabrooks (KO 15, KO 11), Billy Hardy (W 12, KO 8), Paul Gonzales (KO 2), Bones Adams (KO 11), Geraldo Martinez (KO 4), Rolando Bohol (KO 5), Edwin Santana (W 12), Jimmy Navarro (KO 1)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 2009
Background: Followed older brother Gaby (who briefly held both the WBA and WBO bantamweight titles) into boxing and enjoyed a highly successful 108-12 amateur career ... August 1984 professional debut took place in a shopping mall parking lot in hometown of Laredo on one of Gaby's undercards ... Went undefeated in first 12 pro fights before losing decision to 1984 Olympic gold medalist Paul Gonzales in July '86 ... Bounced back with eight-fight winning streak, including second-round TKO of 1976 Olympian Louis Curtis for the USBA super flyweight title in April '88 ... Took IBF bantamweight title from Kelvin Seabrooks via 15-round stoppage in July '88 ... By then, Canizales had developed into an aggressive, quick-handed, thinking boxer who punched in crisp combinations. And although he had a tight defense, he was not averse to mixing it up ... Defended IBF bantamweight belt a record-setting 16 consecutive times, from '88 to October '94 ... Avenged loss to Gonzales by stopping him on cuts in two rounds in June '90 ... Beating previously undefeated 18-year-old Bones Adams in March '93 was pinnacle of lengthy run of title defenses. Held a narrow 96-94 edge on all three scorecards when fight was stopped at 1:32 mark of 11th round ... Relinquished bantam strap and moved up to challenge WBA super bantamweight beltholder Wilfredo Vazquez in January 1995, losing a split decision ... Future title hopes were dashed when Junior Jones won a split decision at junior feather in March '96 ... Plugged on at junior lightweight, but age and the wear-and-tear of a busy schedule had eroded his skills, prompting him to retire after losing 10-round split-decision to future IBF featherweight titlist Frankie Toledo at Philadelphia's Blue Horizon in September '99 ... Fact that he was never stopped in 57 pro bouts is a tribute to his defensive ability and chin ... Just as good on the road as he was at home, winning fights in France, Monaco, South Africa, Great Britain, and Japan ... Criticized for never attempting to unify bantam title ... Graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Texas A&M International University in May 2003 ... Entered Hall of Fame as member of the Class of 2009 along with former heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis and former junior welterweight titleholder Brian Mitchell.





Canizales slams a right into Kelvin Seabrooks en route to winning the IBF bantamweight title in July 1988. The 15th-round TKO led to a record-setting title reign that included 16 straight defenses over seven years.

Stephen B. Acuna, founder of the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing, presents Canizales with a painting of himself and the Rocky Marciano Outstanding Champion award.



This is how Canizales looked at the peak of his career as one of the finest bantamweights of the late-1980s and early-'90s.

Canizales pounds Eddie Rangel into the ropes during their August 1990 title fight in Saratoga Springs, New York. It was a relatively close fight through the first four rounds before Canizales closed in and stopped his challenger in the fifth round.

Catchweight Bout

Juan Manuel Marquez

Main Event 12 Rounds

Floyd Mayweather

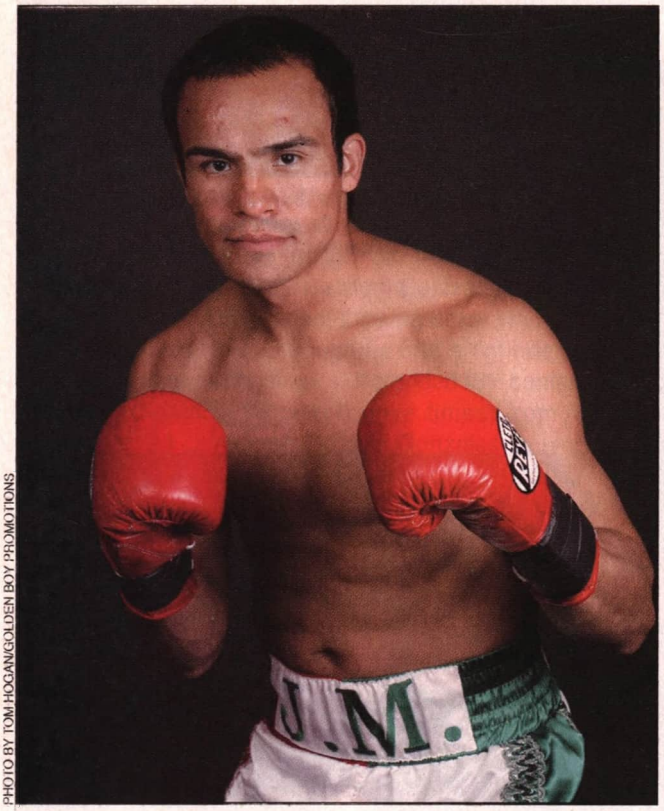


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

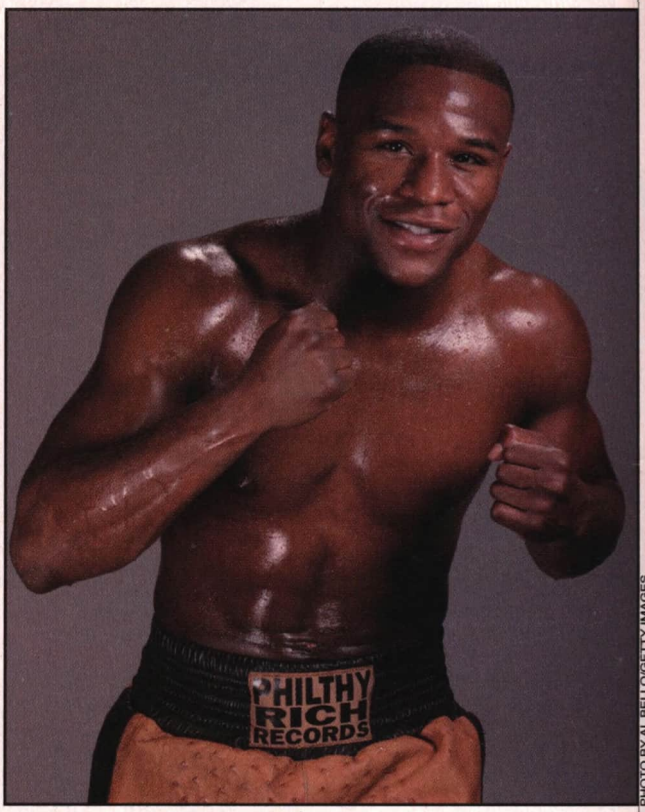


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

If you needed a gauge to see how enormous Manny Pacquiao has become in the boxing world, consider that the upcoming big-cash bout between Juan Manuel Marquez and the returning Floyd Mayweather is being fought in Pacquiao's shadow.

Frustrated by his two close fights with Pacquiao, Marquez probably hopes beating Mayweather will trump Pacquiao's achievements and make him, once and for all, a star. And Mayweather, perhaps jealous of the recent attention given to Pacquiao, may want to make a statement by beating Marquez, who has been Pacquiao's toughest opponent.

But this HBO Pay-Per-View event shouldn't be considered simply the gateway to "Pac-Man." It's an intriguing bout featuring two modern greats.

Marquez is giving away some size, but neither fighter uses his size to win fights; both have had winning careers because of their intelligence. In fact, these are two of the smartest fighters in the business.

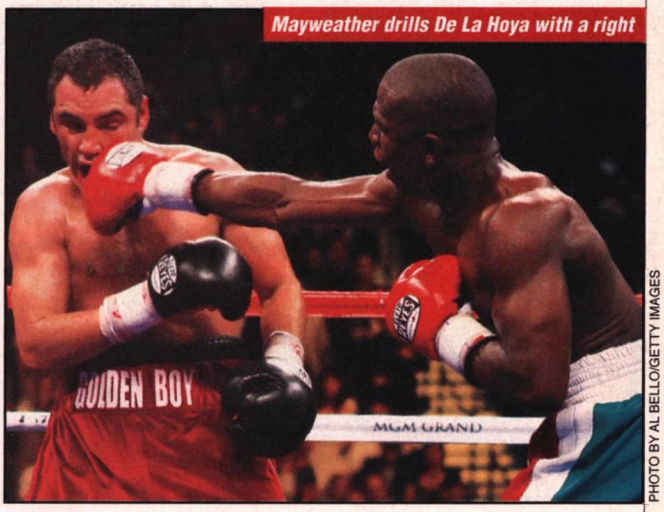
Will this be another clinical win for Mayweather? Or will Marquez take advantage of Mayweather's long layoff and turn the bout into an unexpected war? Boxing fans will find out July 18 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Record and World Rating

Marquez puts Diaz down and out

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 50-4-1 with 37 knockouts ... Made pro debut in May '93 ... Lost debut by DQ ... Failed to win WBA featherweight title in September '99 ... Won vacant IBF featherweight title in February '03 ... Made four successful defenses ... Won WBA featherweight title in November '03 ... Made three defenses before losing title in March '06 ... Won WBC super featherweight title in March '07 ... Made one defense before losing title in March '08 ... Won world lightweight championship in September '08 ... While making his first defense, won vacant WBA and WBO lightweight belts in February '09 ... Recognized by THE RING as world lightweight champion.



Mayweather drills De La Hoya with a right

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

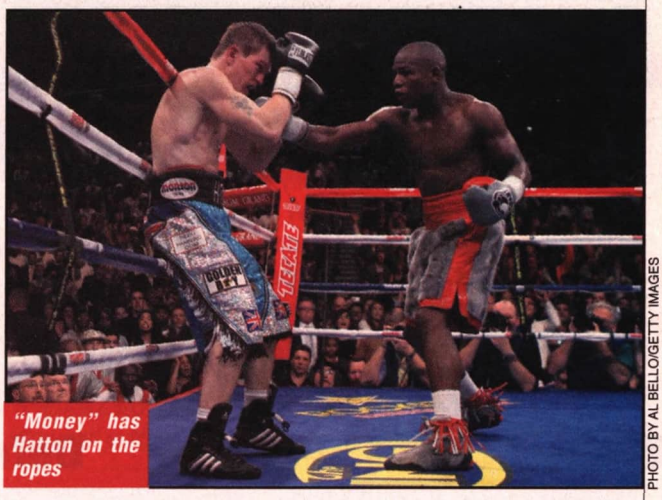
Is 39-0 with 25 knockouts ... Amateur career included a record of 84-6 and a bronze medal at the '96 Olympics ... Made pro debut October 1996 ... Won WBC super featherweight title in October '98 ... Had eight successful defenses ... Won vacant world championship and WBC lightweight title in April '02 ... Made four successful defenses ... Won WBC junior welterweight title in June '05 ... Won IBF welterweight in June '06 ... Won world welterweight championship in November '06 ... Won WBC junior middleweight title in May '07 ... Won WBC welterweight title in December '07 ... Not ranked by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Casamayor samples Marquez' jab

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 35 years old ... Stands 5'7" with a 67-inch reach ... Excellent stamina ... Durable and resilient ... Slim, solid frame ... Prone to cuts ... Back problems postponed pro debut ... Has never fought above 135 pounds in his entire career.



"Money" has Hatton on the ropes

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Is 32 years old ... Stands 5'8" with a 72-inch reach ... Compact frame ... Excellent conditioning ... Physically strong ... Chin is a question because he's rarely been hit ... Fragile hands ... History of shoulder injuries ... Comfortable at welterweight.

Juan Manuel Marquez

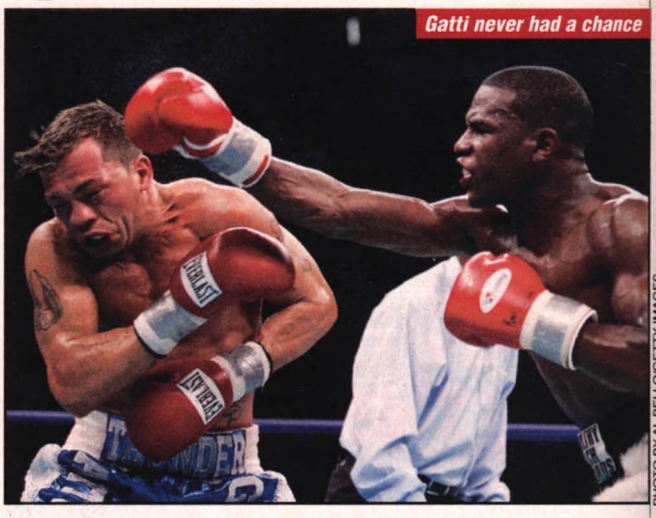
Floyd Mayweather

Best Weapons

Barrera eats a right from Marquez

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Sneaky power … Intelligence … Can drop an opponent with a left hook or a straight right or an uppercut from either side … Effective with a left hook to the head followed by a left hook to the body.



Gatti never had a chance

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Amazing reflexes … Best punch may be his right lead … Can anchor himself and launch ferocious combinations … Speedy … Poised … Tremendous concentration and self-belief … Smart strategist.

Previous Fight

Stopped Juan Diaz in nine rounds on February 28 at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas … Survived Diaz' early onslaught … Turned the fight around for good in round eight when he cut Diaz and staggered him with an uppercut … A right hook-left uppercut knocked Diaz through the ropes in round nine … Finished Diaz with a right uppercut at 2:34 of the round.

Scored an impressive 10th-round knockout of then-undefeated Ricky Hatton on December 8, 2007, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas … Hatton's mauling style discomforted him in the early rounds, but Mayweather's superior skills eventually prevailed … Dropped Hatton the first time with a perfect left hook … Flurried to drop Hatton a second time to end the fight.

Quality of Opposition

Had trouble attracting name opponents early in his career, but has made up for it with quality wins over Marco Antonio Barrera (W 12), Rocky Juarez (W 12), Joel Casamayor (KO 11), and Juan Diaz (KO 9) … Had two close bouts with Manny Pacquiao (D 12, L 12) … Also has wins over Agapito Sanchez (W 12), Robbie Peden (KO 10), Derrick Gainer (Tech. W 7), and Manuel Medina (KO 7)) … Lost close 12-round decisions to Freddie Norwood in '99 and Chris John in '06.

Spent some of his prime years fighting light competition, but overall has fought a strong selection of opponents including Genaro Hernandez (KO 8), Angel Manfredy (KO 2), Diego Corrales (KO 10), Carlos Hernandez (W 12), Jesus Chavez (KO 9) Jose Luis Castillo (W 12, W 12), Arturo Gatti (KO 6), Sharmba Mitchell (KO 6), Zab Judah (W 12), Carlos Baldomir (W 12), Oscar De La Hoya (W 12), and Hatton (KO 10).

Defense

At one time was a cautious, defensive fighter, but has sacrificed some defense in recent years to become a more exciting fighter … Tends to step out of range rather than use head movement … Sometimes walks into punches, which cost him against Pacquiao.

One of the best ever … Difficult to hit because of his tucked in chin/shoulder posture … Good footwork … Likes to lean on the ropes and pick off punches … Dazzling foot and hand speed, along with technical skills, make it all possible.

Juan Manuel Marquez

Floyd Mayweather

Style

Marquez has Jimrex Jaca in serious trouble

PHOTO BY FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

An Americanized version of the classic Mexican boxer ... The right-hander uses ring generalship and quickness along with good combination punching ... Slow starter, builds momentum as fight progresses ... Excellent fundamentals ... Has become more aggressive in recent years ... Can make adjustments mid-fight ... Keeps guard high ... Head clashes have been a problem ... Willing to trade punches.

His elusiveness takes an opponent's heart away ... Orthodox puncher ... Waits for an opponent to get sloppy and make mistakes ... Excellent counterpuncher ... Deft at blocking and slipping punches ... Has recently developed a habit of giving away early rounds, but comes on in the final half of a fight ... Becomes bold only when an opponent is tired ... Makes it look so easy that fans sometimes get bored.

Mayweather goes upside Judah's head

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

The Questions

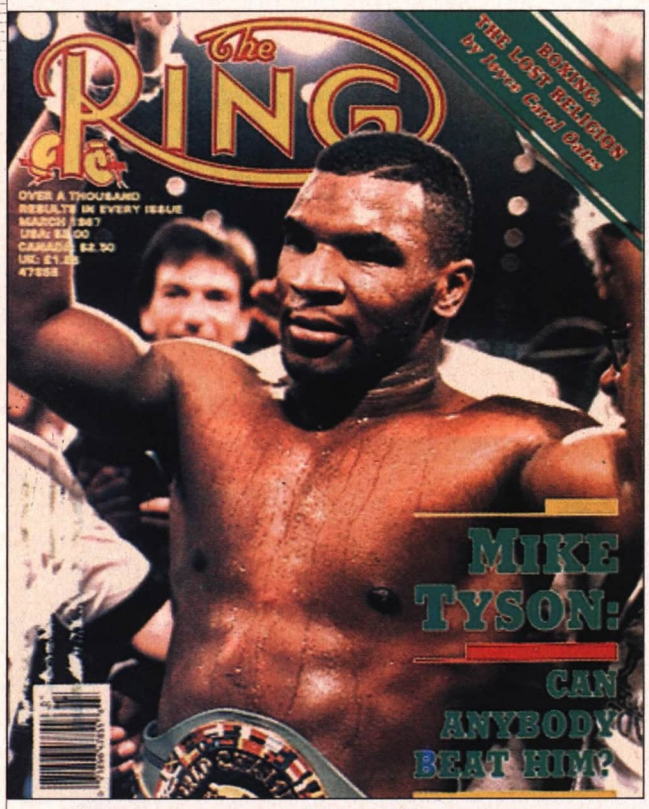
Can this former featherweight carry his power to welterweight? Can he solve Mayweather's airtight defense? Will his delicate skin hold up? At one month shy of 36, will he become old overnight? Will he fall short in another close fight?

Can a fighter who relies on speed and reflexes look sharp after a 19-month layoff? Is he too distracted by alleged financial problems to focus on boxing? Is he taking the smaller Marquez too lightly? Will he be able to handle Marquez' second-half surge?

The Outcome

After a cautious start, the bout evolves into an intense, smartly fought contest with neither fighter gaining a substantial advantage. Inspired by a cut on Marquez' eyebrow, Mayweather will rally over the final two rounds and win by a close, unpopular decision.

March 1987



COVER STORY: "Mike Tyson: Can Anybody Beat Him?" is Nigel Collins' account of Tyson's sensational knockout of Trevor Berbick to annex the WBC heavyweight title.

World Champions

(for the period ended December 2, 1986)
Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Cruiserweight: Carlos DeLeon
Light Heavyweight: vacant
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: vacant
Welterweight: Lloyd Honeyghan
Junior Welterweight: vacant
Lightweight: vacant
Junior Lightweight: Brian Mitchell
Featherweight: Steve Cruz
Junior Featherweight: vacant
Bantamweight: Bernardo Pinango
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada

"One came away from Mike Tyson's annihilation of Trevor Berbick feeling he'd seen a pivotal episode in boxing history, a match to be remembered not for the fight itself, for there was none, but for the historical significance of the moment," wrote Collins. "Like Dempsey's cruel demolition of Willard, Louis' battering of Braddock, and Marciano's come-from-behind kayo of Walcott, Tyson's second-round knockout of Berbick ushered in a new boxing era—The Tyson Era."

Of Tyson's legitimacy, Collins wrote: "If there are still some who doubt Tyson's authenticity, they belong among those who still believe the world is flat and the moon is made of green cheese."

Although there was discussion of future opponents and their chances of beating "Iron Mike," Collins concluded by saying, "At this juncture, there doesn't seem to be a heavyweight around capable of defeating Tyson in the ring. But from now on, fighting will probably be the easiest part of Mike's life. Fame has ruined more than one fighter. Some cynics, desperate for a pessimistic angle, hint that it might also be Tyson's downfall."

Of course, those cynics eventually proved correct, but before the fall, the boxing world was treated to one helluva thrill ride.

"Boxing: The Lost Religion" by acclaimed novelist Joyce Carol Oates is an excerpt from her book *On Boxing*, an insightful, intellectual, extremely well-written look at the Sweet Science.

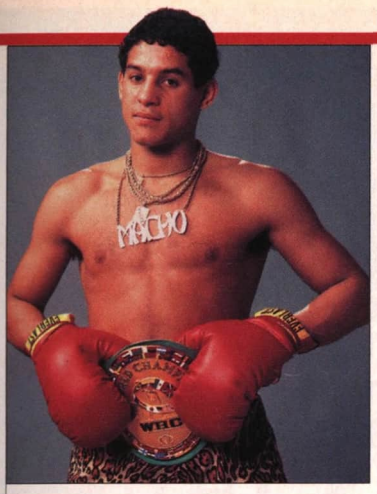
"A brilliant boxing match, quicksilver in its motion, transpiring far more rapidly than the mind can absorb," wrote Oates, "can have the power that Emily Dickinson attributed to great poetry: You know it's great when it takes the top of your head off."

Oates dug deeper than most boxing journalist, especially when probing the relationship between fans and fighters.

"Dustin Hoffman recalls a boxing match he had seen as a boy: As the triumphant boxer left to pass up the aisle, an ecstatic fan, male, followed closely after him, wiping all he could of the sweat from the boxer's body onto himself."

"Pug Style" by Joseph D'O'Brian is a fun essay on fighters' clothes in and out of the ring. Here's D'O'Brian's take on why Hector Camacho wore such outrageous ring attire:

"Camacho, I suspect, wears those trunks partly as a way of saying, *Yes, I look silly, but don't you dare laugh at me.* But he may also be wearing them as a statement to himself. He might be telling himself, *If I come into the ring dressed like*



Camacho makes a fashion statement

this, I had better win. There is no way I can avoid making myself ridiculous if I lose wearing this outfit."

While Muhammad Ali received high grades for wardrobe, D'O'Brian noted that the People's Champ robe given to him by Elvis Presley was one Ali's "few departures from sartorial good taste."

"Dennis Andries: Will He Stop Hearns' Bid To Win The Light Heavyweight Title?" by Jonathan Shapiro is both an introduction to WBC 175-pound titleholder Dennis Andries and a preview of his upcoming defense against Thomas Hearns. Although "The Hit Man" had been installed as the favorite, Andries was used to being the underdog.

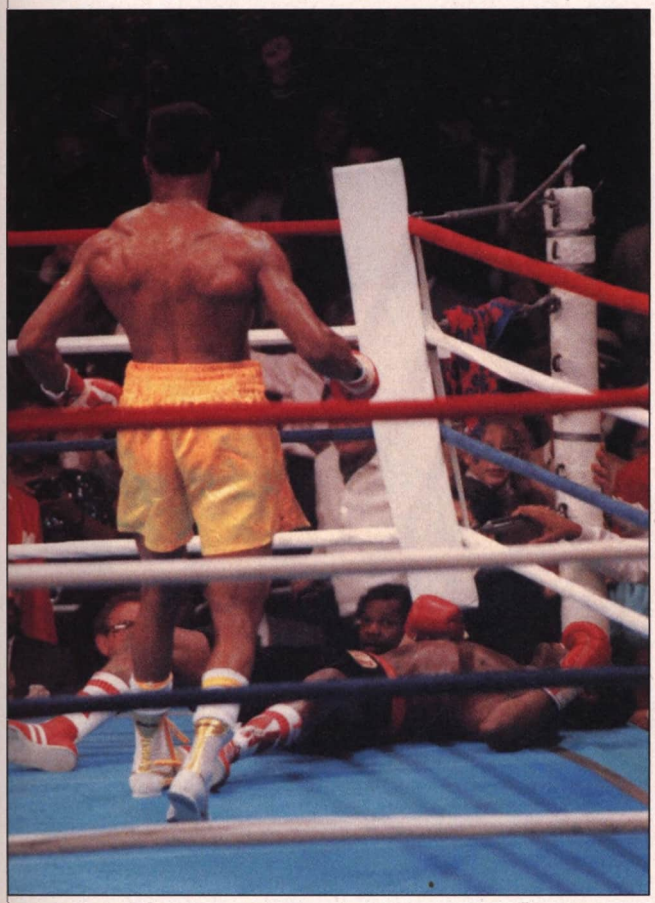
"When I fought J.D. Williamson, *Boxing News* predicted he'd keep the title," Andries said. "When I fought [Tony] Sibson, the press said he would take it from me. But I won. All I ever do is win."

Against Hearns, however, the pundits proved correct, as Andries was stopped in the 10th round. Even so, the Guyana-born Briton bounced back to regain the belt from Jeff Harding in 1991.

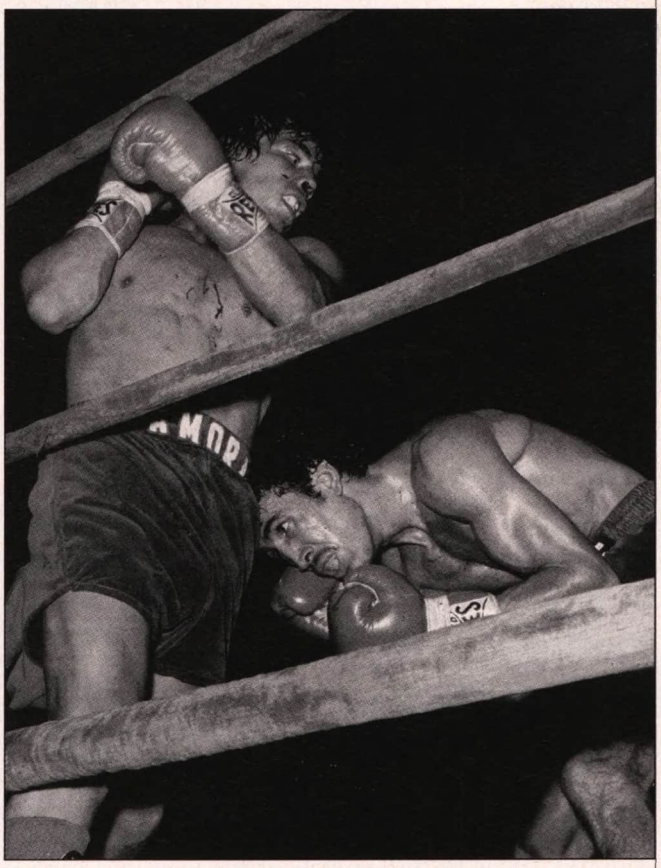
"In This Corner " by Las Vegas correspondent Jack Welsh features referee Richard Steele.

"My toughest fight to work was when [Carlos] Zarate knocked out Alfonso Zamora in four rounds," Steele told Welsh. "The reason was both had so much talent and hit so fast with both hands. They also knew every illegal trick in the book, so I had to be sure they weren't trying to put one over on me. They were stablemates who really disliked each other."

"Rings Around The World" was the section that allowed THE RING to boast that there were "Over a thousand results in every issue." Among the more notable cards featured New Jersey boxing commissioner Larry Hazzard's attempt to have judges make more liberal use of the 10-point must scoring system. In the main event, Juan Ramon Santana won a 10-round decision over Joey Ferrell in a junior welterweight bout. There was no dispute with the unanimous decision that went to Santana by tallies of 95-91, 97-90, and 95-92, but, unfortunately, Hazzard's well-considered plan to have scores more reflective of the action inside of the ring never caught on. ■



Hearns ends Andries' first title reign



Zarate ducks under Zamora's hook

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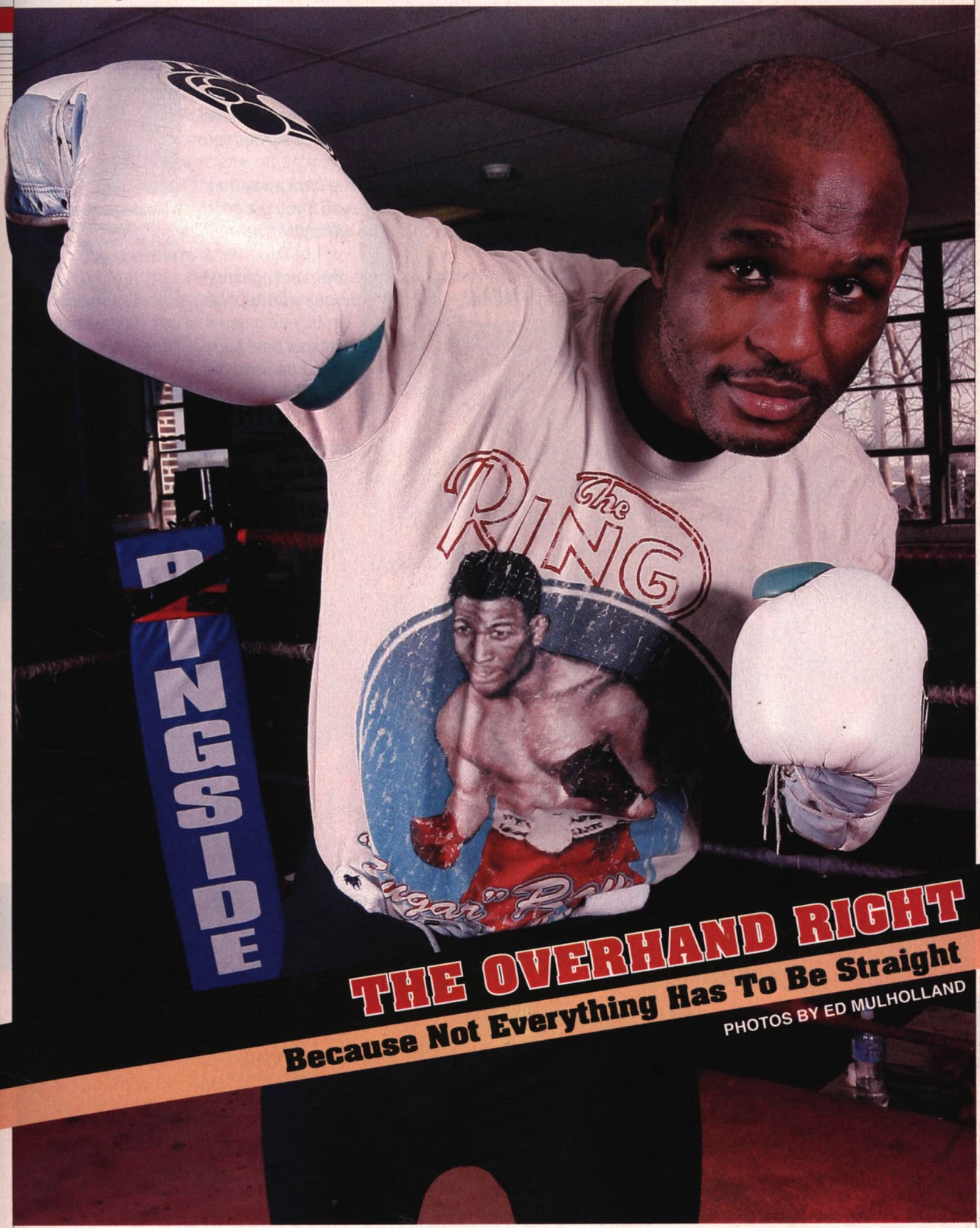
[Perfect Execution]

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



THE OVERHAND RIGHT

Because Not Everything Has To Be Straight

PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

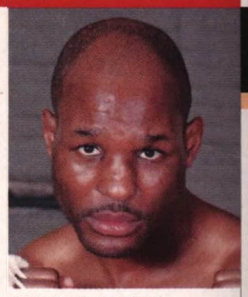
You've read a lot of times now in this column that your punches are supposed to be short and straight. Straight out and straight back. Right from the shoulder. Most of the time that's true because the short, straight punches are the ones your opponent doesn't see and they're the ones that carry the most power. Short and straight is the right way to execute.

But there will be times when a short, straight punch isn't your best weapon. Sometimes you have to go around your opponent's gloves or, in the case of the overhand right, over them. Sometimes you have to loop your punches and it's not always wrong to do it that way.

If you've got a guy in front of you who is taller than you are and is good at leaning back away from your straight right hand, you can try that punch all day and it might never land—even if you get good position. But if you know how to throw a good overhand right, you can catch him with power, no matter how tall he is.

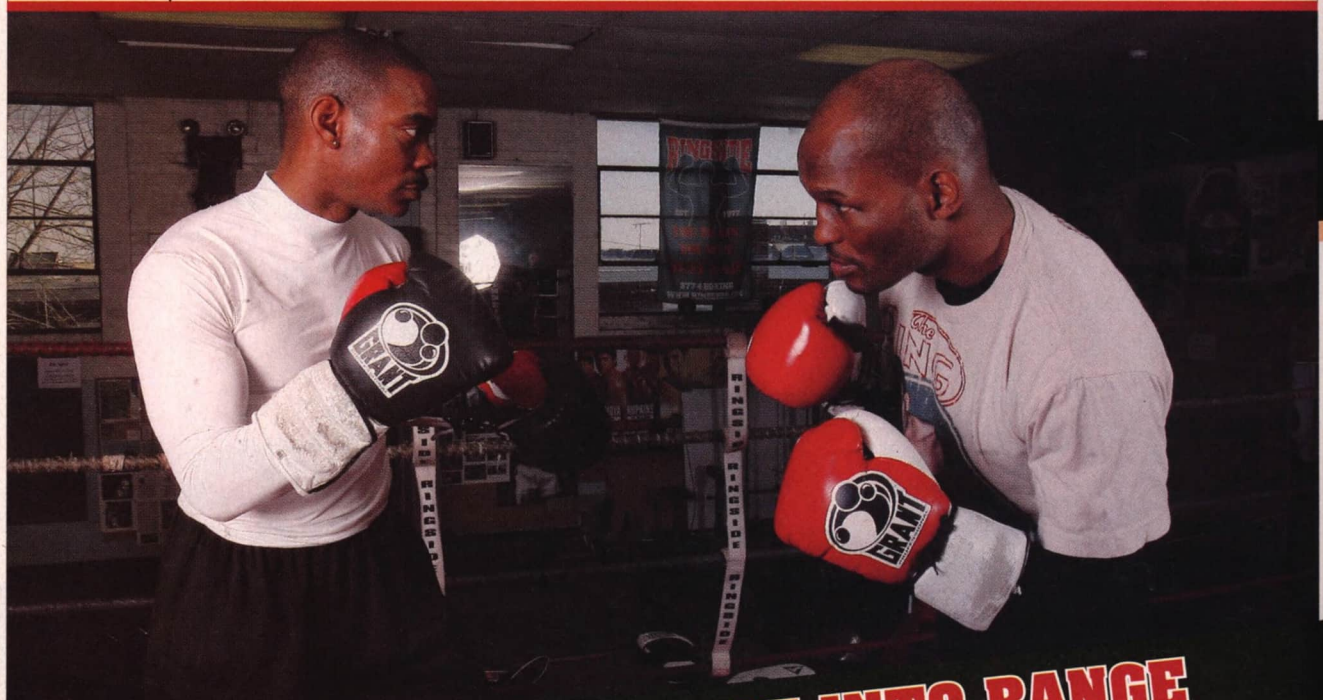
I've usually been taller than the guys I'm fighting, so I haven't had to use the overhand right that much, but it was great against Antonio Tarver. He had the perfect style for it: a tall guy who kept his hands low a lot.

Another Philadelphia fighter, Tim Witherspoon, had a great overhand right. He almost beat Larry Holmes for the heavyweight title back in the day. He wasn't tall for a heavyweight, so he used the overhand right to chop down bigger guys. That's exactly how it's supposed to be used. And when he landed that overhand right, guys went to sleep.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

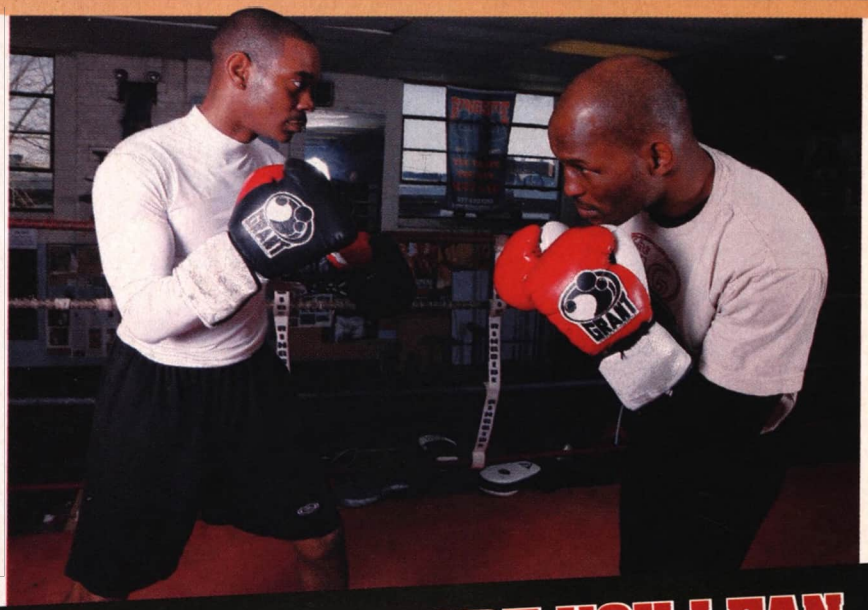


FIRST THINGS FIRST: GET INTO RANGE

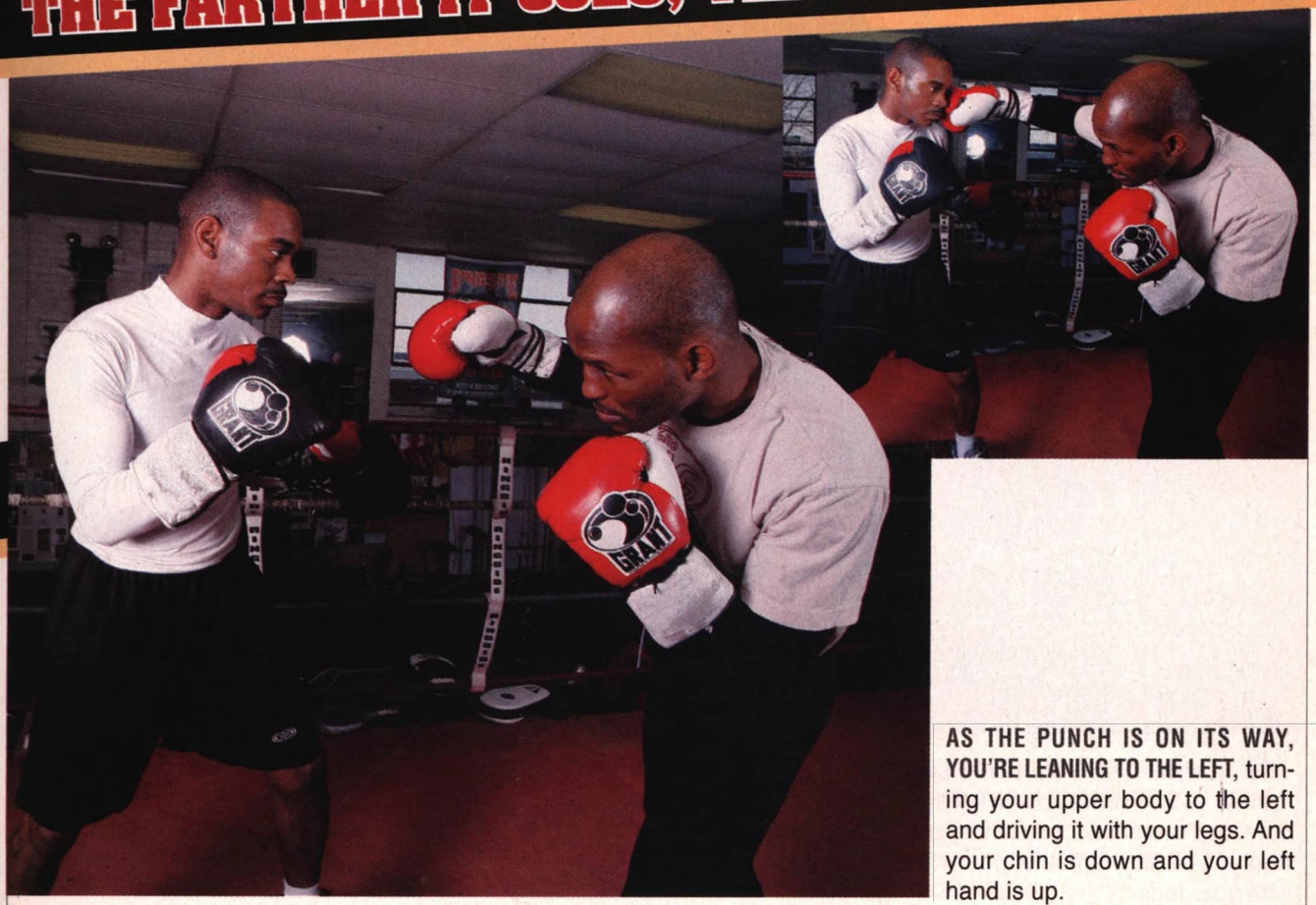
LIKE WITH ANY OTHER PUNCH, YOU HAVE TO GET IN RANGE TO LAND THE OVERHAND RIGHT, but you don't have to get as close as you usually do. Establish distance with the jab just like you always do, and once you're in range, give your opponent something to think about, like I'm doing with Danny Davis here. Move your gloves around. Feint. Just because you're throwing a looping punch doesn't mean you have to show it before you throw it.

LEAN LEFT

YOU'VE GOT TO DIP TO THE LEFT AS YOU'RE THROWING THE OVERHAND RIGHT, putting most of your body weight on your left leg. You can't throw it any other way, unless your opponent is moving to his left (your right) and moves right into it. So as you start the punch, lean left, like you're going to throw a left hook to the body. And get that weight on your left leg. But you don't lean and then throw. It's one motion. You're leaning as you're throwing the punch.



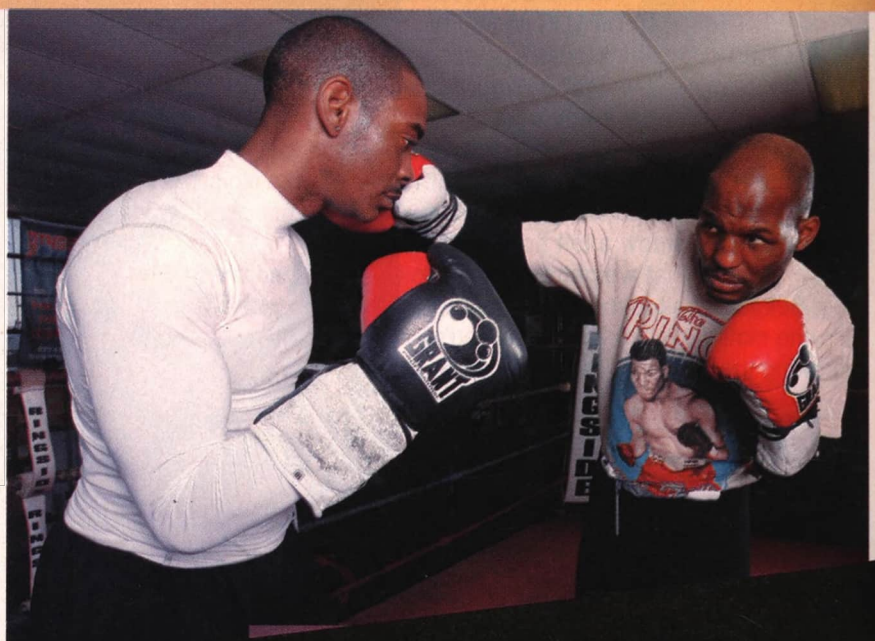
THE FARTHER IT GOES, THE MORE YOU LEAN



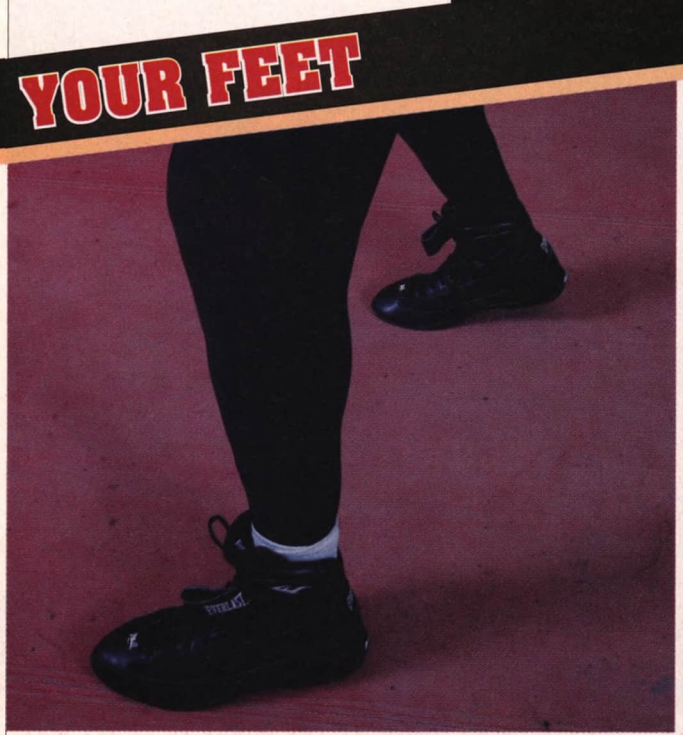
AS THE PUNCH IS ON ITS WAY, YOU'RE LEANING TO THE LEFT, turning your upper body to the left and driving it with your legs. And your chin is down and your left hand is up.

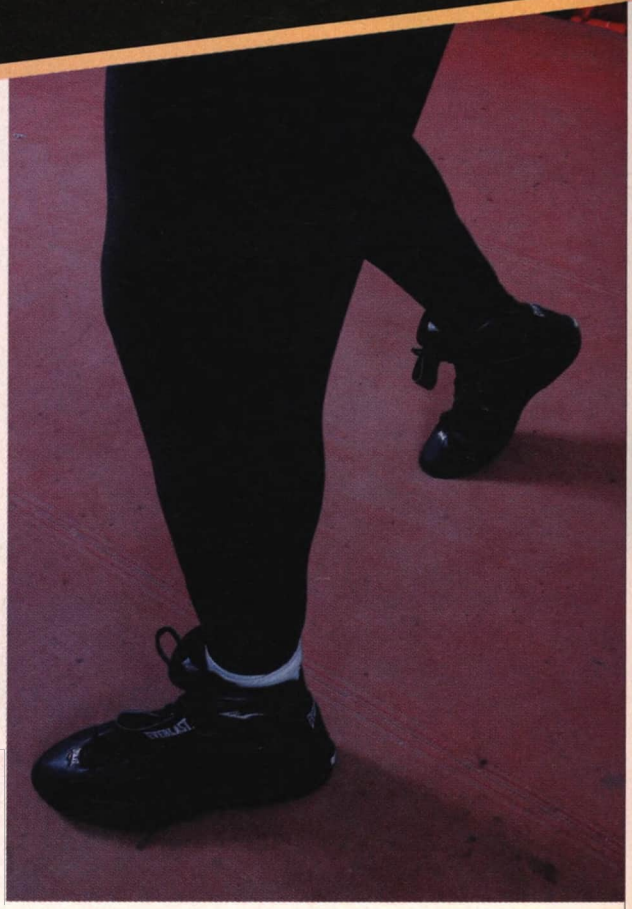
REMEMBER YOUR FORM

HERE IT IS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE. Notice the execution: chin down, left hand up, eyes on the target. Even though you're not throwing a straight punch, execution is important.



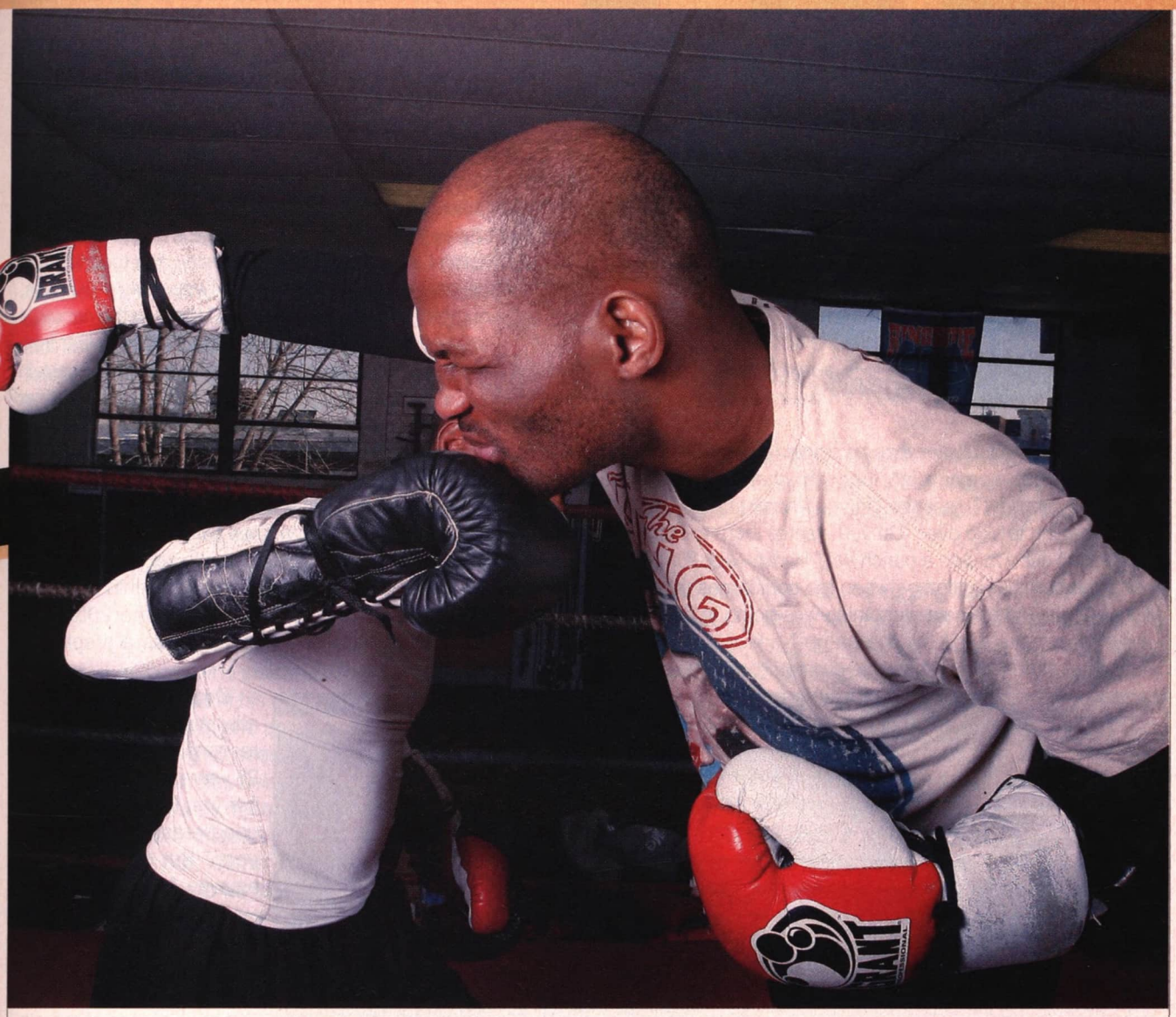
YOUR FEET





THIS IS WHAT YOUR FEET AND LEGS ARE DOING WHEN YOU THROW THE OVERHAND RIGHT. The first shot is the beginning stance. The second is finishing up. Your left foot is planted, and you're on the ball of your right foot driving the punch with your legs.

DON'T OVERUSE IT



THERE ARE A LOT OF WAYS TO DO THE WRONG THING WITH THIS PUNCH. You can throw it from too far away. You can throw it with your chin up in the air. Or, you can throw it too many times. A lot of guys land this punch once or twice and think they can do it again and again without setting it up or getting into position. Here's what happens when you throw it so many times your opponent knows it's coming and knows how to counter it.

By Michael Rivest
PHOTOS BY JOHN SOMMERS

Tiffanie Aims For Olympic Gold

As a kid growing up in southern California, Tiffanie Hearn loved watching Bruce Lee movies. She was intrigued by his cool under fire, his laser-like focus, and his singular ability to kick ass. She couldn't fantasize about *becoming* Bruce Lee, of course. She was, well, a girl and there are some borders you just can't cross—not even in dreams. Or so she thought.

Three years ago Hearn walked into James Doolin's Louisville boxing gym and, without even knowing, crossed that border. "I only wanted to lose a few pounds," she said, "but James looked at me like he'd been waiting for me to show up."

Doolin barely said hello when he pointed to a picture of Nikki Cane, the 2006 heavyweight national champion in a *USA Boxing Magazine*. "This is the girl you'll have to beat," he told her, managing to skip over, "Do you want to learn to box?"

"I hadn't even thrown a punch yet," Hearn said. "But it was weird, the communication between me and James that night, like we both kind of knew something was going to happen."

As the weeks went by, the name Nikki Cane became more than simply the first female amateur boxer Hearn had heard of; in Hearn's mind, the name was alternately a goal, a challenge, an obstacle, a dare, or a taunt—but always the prime motivator.

Hearn had been no stranger to competitive sports before finding her way to Doolin's gym. She was a basketball standout at Division I San Jose State University, and then finished her college career at Emporia State University in Kansas, then the number-one ranked Division II team in the nation.

But Doolin sensed a bad habit in Hearn. "It was clear from the start that she must have always held something back in basketball," he said. "I could tell that she had lots inside of her that had never been brought out."

Doolin challenged Hearn more than she could have ever imagined possible.

"He wanted perfection," she said. "I never trained like that before—six days a week, sometimes twice a day."

Whatever the dynamic between Doolin and Hearn, something worked. She dropped 40 pounds and within two years she had a ticket to Colorado Springs for the 2008 USA Boxing National Tournament. But there was a problem: It was a ticket for one.

Hearn hammers the heavybag

Doolin had to unexpectedly stay behind for medical reasons. So there she was, 23 years old, and headed to her first tournament with a good reason to say, "Next year." But off Hearn went anyway. Alone.

Doolin might have thought he'd reached that "extra something" inside Hearn when he waived goodbye to her at the airport, but it's what happened when she got to Colorado that separates her from the Bruce Lee wannabes.

At the weigh-in, Hearn learned that there was only one other woman in the 178-pound weight class she had dropped to, and it was someone she knew she could beat. For anyone else, this would have been

received as a gift. She was at her first national tournament and was one winnable bout away from a national championship.

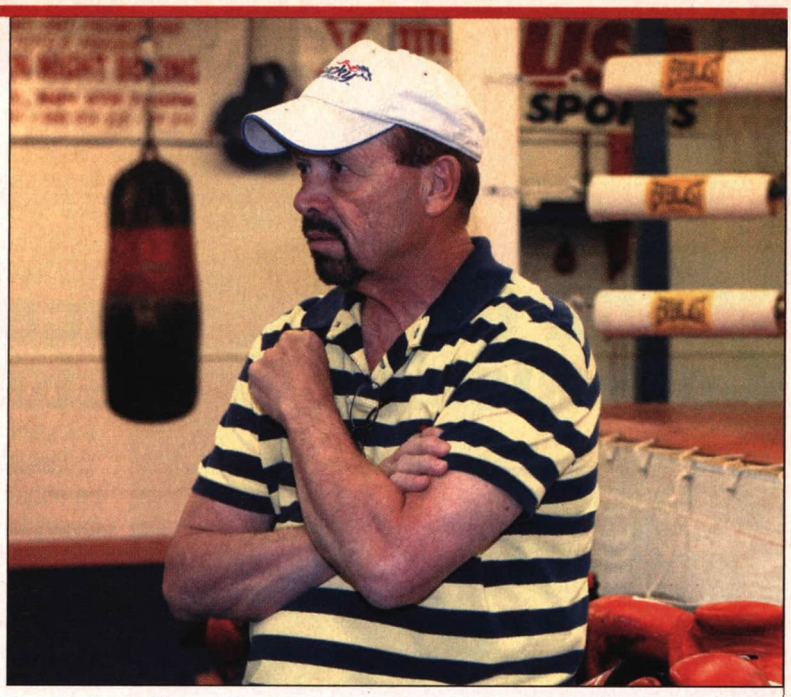
Instead, Hearn asked what was up with Nikki Cane. "She'll be fighting at 189," the surly official said, shaking his head because he didn't want to re-open any bidding for a dreamer.

"I'll switch," said Hearn. The chance and possibility were worth the risk.

Hearn took on the more experienced and larger Cane in the preliminaries, winning 23-3, and then defeated Denise Ricco in the finals to become the 2008 national champion in the heavyweight division.

Doolin found what's inside Tiffanie Hearn, all right. It's sand.

Since last year's U.S. Nationals, Hearn has been busy winning the 2008 Women's Golden Gloves National Tournament, the 2008 Ringside Tournament, the bronze at the Women's World Championship in Ningbo City, China, and advocating for the introduction of women's boxing in the 2012 Olympic Games. She did the last as one of two USA Boxing representatives at the 2009 Sportaccord in Denver, Colorado, in March. Sportaccord, an annual gathering of 1,500 leading representatives from international sport, provides a forum to discuss such new ideas.



Taskmaster Doolin

Tough Talk From Candid Coach

A conversation with James Doolin is a little like taking a ride with somebody who insists on driving. Just get in. He has something to say and in his own way—about amateur boxing today, about coaching, and about how the old-school way was better than anything he sees happening now.

In boxing vernacular, being "old school" isn't necessarily a compliment. To many, it conjures images of *Rocky*, where Mickey has Balboa chase a chicken—that, of course, and his oft quoted warning, "Women weaken legs."

But Doolin's not to be taken lightly. Now 63, he's trained some big names in his time—Greg Page, who passed away in April. ("I used to tell Greg he was too nice to be fighter. I never heard him say something bad about anybody.") Oliver McCall and James Pritchard are also part of a very long list of Doolin winners.

Here are some of his views, in Doolin straight-speak:

•On U.S. Olympic Team hopes for 2012: "The path to the national team used to be straightforward, with the best boxers winding up at the top. Now there are too many regional qualifiers, judged by local coaches looking to promote their hometown favorites. So, you tell me, if our best boxers don't make it to the Olympic Team, can we win? This is why we haven't seen a great Olympic team since 1976."

•On coaching: "Coaches today are too concerned with being popular. They're afraid they'll lose their jobs if they push their boxers too hard or expect too much. As a result, we don't get the best from our boxers."

•On amateur boxers: "They have too much power. They'll follow the rules a coach puts out there, until they don't want to anymore. Then the coach finds out who's really in charge."

AIBA Says Yes

The Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA) has decided not to wait for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make up its mind on whether women's boxing will be a part of the 2012 Olympic Games.

They're assuming the vote will be "yes" when the IOC meets in Berlin, Germany, on August 13, and they've launched a new website to talk about it: www.aiba.org/en-US/womens/women's_olympics.aspx

AIBA has been a consistent, clear voice in support of women's boxing in the Olympics, championing it at the 2009 Sportaccord. The annual event, attended by a virtual who's who in the international amateur boxing scene, was buzzing with optimism at the prospect of women's boxing at the London Games in 2012.

More than 120 countries feature women's boxing, yet the way things are now, none of them get to participate in the Olympics. This may finally change when the IOC meets in Berlin on August 13. ■

Coming Events

July 8-11: Women's National Golden Gloves, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
July 8-13: USA vs. Italy, Milan, Italy
July 22-25: Junior National Golden Gloves
July 23-25: Junior Men's Golden Gloves, Mesquite, NV

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Media Can Influence Commission Decisions

Eighteenth century philosopher George Berkeley asked: "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

Unless the media is calling them on the carpet, many boxing commissions lose track of their primary role—protecting the fighters over everything else. This means that boxers who need to call it a day slip through the cracks as commissions seldom make the effort to deny a fighter a license.

On April 14,.the Nevada State Athletic Commission and Chairman Bill Brady hit a new low when they licensed former featherweight contender Augie "Kid Vegas" Sanchez. The 32-year-old Sanchez had not fought for eight years and was denied a license in 2001 based on his history of severe knockouts and concussions. But the NSAC decided that because the applicant's medical tests were unremarkable, he should be allowed to compete.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Shame on the NSAC for giving Sanchez his license back

Yes, the commission and its newest chairman, Brady, should be ashamed, but where was the press who repeatedly professes to care about the safety and welfare of the boxers?

Unfortunately, this is nothing new for Nevada or the press. According to Thomas Hauser's 1992 book *Muhammad Ali: His Life And Times*, the Nevada commission licensed Ali to fight Larry Holmes in 1980 even though they had Mayo Clinic records documenting his neurological problems.

Ali lost every round on all three judges' scorecards that night until his corner stopped the bout after round 10. Even so, few in the press condemned the commission for allowing the fight to take place.

Former NSAC Vice Chairman Flip Homansky, not reappointed in 2005 for speaking out on safety issues, has professed for years that too many boxing journalists have conflicts of interest with promoters, venues, fighters, and commissions.

"The promoter controls tickets, seating at fights, and benefits (i.e. meals, flights, cars) for many journalists," said Homansky. "Without access, the reporter has nothing. If you write negatively, you lose access, and are then excluded from interviews. If you are a shill, you are loved by the promoters and handed stories on a platter. This isn't like football or baseball where access is more fairly distributed."

As a former owner of Las Vegas' Triple-A baseball team, The Stars (now known as The 51's), Homansky speaks from experience.

Thankfully, there are members of the media who are not afraid to buck the system.

"I don't know if it's the media's role to tell individuals to retire," said MaxBoxing.com's Steve Kim. "However, we do have a right to express our opinion. And in extreme cases, if we see a guy who should no longer be fighting, those opinions should be

expressed. If there is something that is so egregious, it is the responsibility of the media to be the watchdog."

"Augie Sanchez hasn't fought in more than eight years," said Hauser. "He suffered several *bad* knockouts leading to his retirement. Before a commission licenses a fighter like this, they should conduct a thorough review, including an extensive physical examination, interviews with the fighter and other knowledgeable persons, and having a commission representative watch the applicant in an intense sparring session to ascertain what his skill are. The media should hold commissions responsible when they fall short of the standard."

A commission is a regulatory body, but too often they are worried about generating tax money for the state, keeping their job, and how the media portrays them.

"The rules must be followed and the rules must be fair," said Homansky. "Unlike the milk council, tax considerations come secondary. The safety of the participants must come first."

Unfortunately, ring deaths are the only thing that motivates change because they dominate headlines. No commissioner likes to see his name bandied about in a negative way in the newspapers or on the Internet. So when Nevada had four fighters who suffered brain hemorrhages and two deaths in one year, they established a safety committee that generated lots of popular headlines. This in turn took the heat off of them and business could go on as usual—even though the committee never really dealt with the main issues that contributed to the serious injuries in the first place.

But when the deaths are out of the headlines, mismatches and inappropriate licensing continue.

I combed the Internet following the last NSAC meeting, but nothing was written about Sanchez. A former Vegas high school student with a large following appeared on national television several times, but not even the Vegas media covered his licensing.

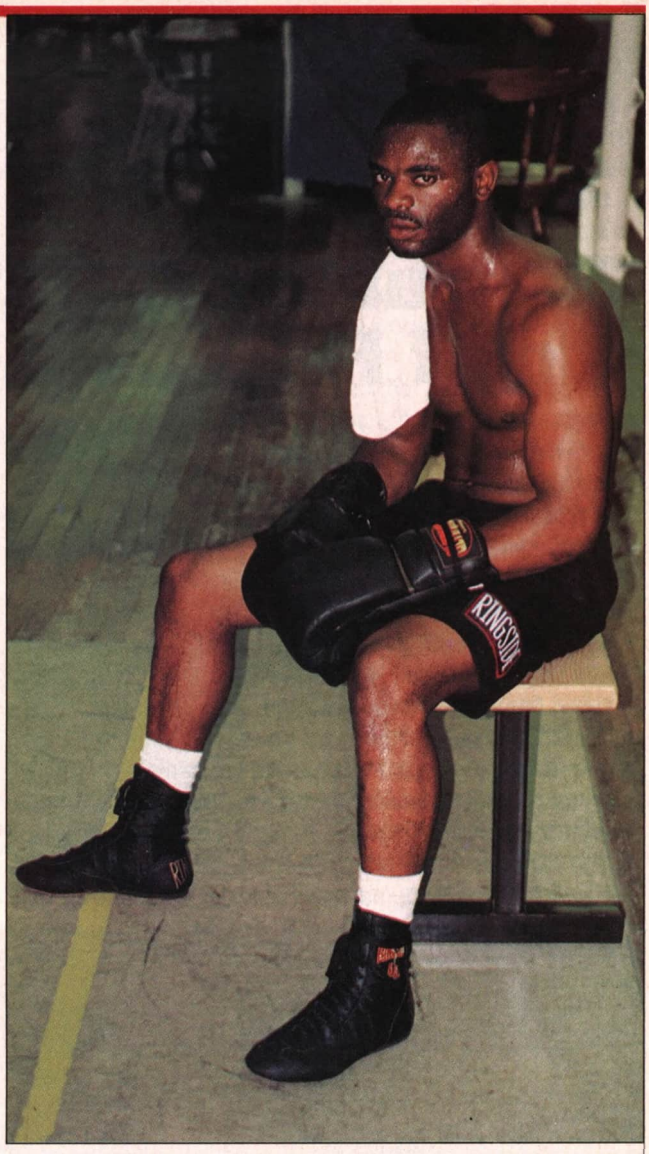
Although Kim was not aware of Sanchez' recent hearing, he isn't afraid to state that Sanchez should no longer be fighting.

"Even during his prime he never exhibited the ability to absorb a punch the way a professional fighter should be able to. I do believe his brutal knockout at the hands of John Michael Johnson several years ago [2001], should have signaled the end of his career.

"In my mind, this is no different than football players, like Troy Aikman and Steve Young, being forced to retire after their resistance to concussions became so poor they had to walk away from the sport. Boxing professionally is not a right, but a privilege that is earned."

The investigative reporter becomes a pariah. Commission executive directors ignore them and feed the most positive writers' stories.

For years, if there was a controversial decision, a negative outcome, or something the NSAC wanted public, they knew exactly which writers who would put a positive spin on the story simply because they were getting a scoop. A few of these same writers were used by promoters to "promote" their agenda.



Should Echols still be fighting?

Although unethical, it is understandable. Everyone under scrutiny would like to put a positive spin on things, and commissions are no different. But in boxing, futures and lives are at stake. Nevertheless, it is simpler to grant every fighter a license that passes basic medical tests and ignore performance.

Kim sites the example of Antwun Echols.

"He's still tough enough to last and can punch, but while he's able to go rounds in many of his fights, when you look at how he moves around the ring and how shaky his legs are, you wonder about the long-term residual damage that is being inflicted upon him. But as long as he's a serviceable guy—meaning that he's a recognizable name, well past his prime—matchmakers will continue to use him as a sacrificial lamb in building up prospects' records."

This is where commissions must forget about media headlines and do the job the governor appointed them to do. It is also where boxing journalists need to recognize they can be a fighter's strongest advocate just by writing the truth no matter how it affects the proximity of their ringside credential. ■

By Jim Bagg

Pacquiao vs. Mayweather? Not If Floyd Can Help It

They say money talks. But when it comes to Floyd "Money" Mayweather, oftentimes Money walks. Or Money balks. And all the while, Money talks ... a lot tougher than he really is.

There have been two distinct phases of Mayweather's career: The "I'm young and I have to prove myself" phase, and the "I've already proven myself and I'm out to make as much money as I can without risking defeat" phase. The dividing line was his two-fight series with Jose Luis Castillo in 2002, which taught him that he *can* be beaten and that there are certain styles that give him problems. When Floyd still thought he was invincible, he was keen to take on anybody (hence his willingness to fight a prime, undefeated Diego Corrales and a prime Castillo). Once he realized he was vincible (the Baggman will not allow himself to be confined by the limits of the English language), it became a game of pick and choose.

Kostya Tszyu? Nah. Arturo Gatti? Sure.

Miguel Cotto? No thanks. An aging Oscar De La Hoya? Show Money the money.

Antonio Margarito? Sorry, not interested. An undersized Ricky Hatton? That's more like it.

Following a quote-unquote retirement (which the Baggenspiel always felt was inspired by the fact that real fans didn't want to see a De La Hoya rematch and were beginning to forcefully demand that Mayweather defend the welterweight title against the dangerous Cotto), Mayweather has done the expected: select a comeback opponent who is well known, marketable, talented, but still fairly safe. For most fighters, Juan Manuel Marquez would be anything but safe. But

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mayweather chooses a minor risk over a major gamble

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Manny got the job done much quicker than Floyd

Mayweather is not most fighters. So he chose lightweight Marquez. He chose a minor gamble instead of giving the fans what they want, a major gamble.

In the wake of Manny Pacquiao's all-out destruction of Ricky Hatton, the boxing world has been buzzing about Pacquiao vs. Mayweather. It's the ultimate superfight, a chance for the first time since Pernell Whitaker-Julio Cesar Chavez for two fighters to touch gloves and clarify beyond any doubt who is the best in the business. It's the only future fight for Pacquiao that anyone wants to talk about.

But the Baggweiser says that's a waste of breath. A year ago, Mayweather might have viewed Pacquiao as undersized and easy pickings. But during Mayweather's extended vacation from the sport, Pac-Man emerged as a new threat for Floyd to avoid.

Just look at Pacquiao's last two fights, against Hatton and De La Hoya, and compare them with Mayweather's last two bouts, against the same two men. The Filipino fireball annihilated them, forcing "The Golden Boy" to quit after eight rounds and concussing "The Hitman" in only two. Mayweather tiptoed his way to a close decision over Oscar and needed nine rounds to dispatch Hatton. Frankly, even if Mayweather had never retired, there's no way you could consider him the pound-for-pound champ anymore. Pacquiao has just been too sensational.

And don't think Mayweather hasn't noticed. Floyd may have an ego (and the Understatement of the Year Award goes to ... Jim Bagg!), but on the inside, he questions himself sometimes. That's why he's danced around his most dangerous possible opponents in recent years. And that's why, about 10 hours before Pacquiao fought Hatton, Mayweather formally announced his fight with Marquez.

If Floyd really wanted a piece of Pacquiao, he could have waited one more day to finalize his comeback fight. He could have waited for Pacquiao to beat Hatton. But he didn't, and that tells the Baggitarius something. In fact, Mayweather is already talking about a rematch with De La Hoya after he beats Marquez! A rematch with the man that Pacquiao obliterated in eight of the most one-sided rounds you'll ever see—that's not the kind of bout someone with a true fighter's heart talks about.

The Baggmeister would typically beat the drums like Buddy Rich for a fight as intriguing and important as Pacquiao-Mayweather, but in this case, such drum beating would just be a lot of wasted motion. Mayweather has made a handsome living the last six years ducking fighters like Pacquiao, and there's no reason to believe he suddenly wants to start testing himself again now.

It's the biggest-money fight in boxing. And it's the biggest fight in boxing for Money. But Pacquiao made the mistake of obliterating Hatton and De La Hoya, and the Bagg Lebowski suspects he obliterated his chances of luring Mayweather into the ring in the process.

So Close And Yet ...

If there's a song lyric that accurately sums up Jermain Taylor's career, it's this: "Didn't we almost have it all?" (And yes, that is the first and last time the Bagginator will ever quote Whitney Houston.)

No, Taylor's career isn't over. But at the same time, he's probably entering Mays-on-the-Mets territory (no offense meant to Willie Mays for the comparison) and is highly unlikely to achieve anything that's going to significantly alter his legacy. And that legacy is going to be as a fighter who was always just one weapon, or one glaring weakness, or one punch thrown, or one punch not ducked away from greatness. He almost had it all ... but he could never quite put it all together.

Taylor will go down as one of the all-time overrated underrated fighters. There will be people who say he stunk, and they'll be wrong, and there will be people who go the opposite direction on account of looking at his record and seeing two wins over Bernard Hopkins, and they'll be wrong too.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Taylor falls apart in the final round

On the one hand, he never really, truly, indisputably won a major fight his whole career. Every big victory was by debatable decision (except his win over Jeff Lacy, which was a case of beating a name opponent with the abilities of a club-fighter by the time they met). On the other hand, he did go more or less even-up with Hopkins and Winky Wright over 36 rounds, which is no small achievement. Plus, in his three losses, he nearly knocked out Kelly Pavlik, acquitted himself quite well in losing by unanimous decision in the rematch, and was comfortably ahead of Carl Froch before losing with 14 seconds left on the clock. They were all competitive defeats.

At the top levels of the sport, Taylor never was an easy out for anyone, but he never turned anyone into an easy out either. He always came just a little bit short of getting the job done in style. But, hey, Jermain, you're in good company there. That's precisely how the Bagganova is remembered by his ex-wives in terms of bedroom performance.

Step Aside, Doug Tucker

There's a new sheriff in town when it comes to incomprehensible scorecards, as Canada's Jack Woodburn had Froch leading Taylor 106-102 heading into the 12th round. Maybe this Canuck took one too many pucks to the head in his hockey-playing youth, or perhaps he was raised by a pack of wild Sasquatches, or maybe he was drunk on Moosehead or even fermented maple syrup. But to the clear-headed viewer, Froch was not winning that fight—especially not by a four-point margin.

Woodburn is a veteran judge whose career has mostly been fairly inconspicuous, but he does have one other sore spot on his resume: a ridiculously wide 116-112 card in favor of Chad Dawson against Glen Johnson. That's two strikes against you, Woodburn. One more, and we're locking you in your igloo.

The Shark Circles *24/7*

After five seasons of HBO's *24/7* (if you can call four episodes of something a season), it's time to call in Richard Steele and have him wave it off. The first season, featuring Mayweather and De La Hoya, was an "A+." The second season, starring Mayweather and Hatton, was an "A-." The third season, following Roy Jones and Joe Calzaghe around, was a "D+," but we figured that owed to the lack of personality of the fighters involved. Indeed, the show bounced back somewhat with its fourth season, featuring De La Hoya and Pacquiao, which was a solid "B." But this most recent season, starring Pacquiao and Hatton, was a "C-," and it's apparent that the formula is played out.

The problem is that *24/7* is just regurgitating the same fighters. We know their families, we know their trainers, we've seen their bare white asses. This most recent season devolved into a documentary on Michael Moorer at times, simply because the producers had run out of material on Pacquiao, Hatton, Floyd Mayweather Sr., and Freddie Roach. And a piece on Moorer works a lot better as a 12-minute *Real Sports* production than it does as a four-part *24/7* series.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Moorer parades his boss around the ring

The Monthly Mailbagg

Operating under the assumption that swine flu cannot be spread via e-mail, the Baggtastic took a dip into his inbox and came up with one very interesting note from a reader:

Oh Great Baggstradamus,

The Stevemeister was looking back at an issue of THE RING from a few months ago, the November '08 issue, and he stumbled across your article entitled "Provision Quest," where you requested some special stipulation fights. Did you realize you blew the lid off the Antonio Margarito cheating scandal a few months before he even fought Shane Mosley? You suggested a Margarito-Librado Andrade "Loaded Gloves Match," even specifically mentioning the Jack Dempsey plaster of paris approach.

Did you know something the rest of us didn't? Or is it possible that Margarito had never loaded his gloves before and got the idea from your article?

Steve Burns

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Bagg denies inside information

Stevemeister,

Never let it be said that the Baggadoodle has a conscience, but if he did, he'd hate to think "The Plastered Bastard" got his cheating idea from yours truly.

Though the world's greatest boxing columnist usually will jump on any opportunity to brag, the truth is that he didn't have any inside information and doesn't have X-ray vision that allowed him to see into Margarito's gloves. This was basically just a fluke.

However, just in case the Baggareeno is developing an uncanny superpower that allows him to write about something seemingly absurd and then have it turn into reality, he's going to use this opportunity to predict that, by the end of 2009, he will win the Powerball lottery, sleep with Scarlett "Don't Call Me Ingemar" Johansson, and receive hand-written apologies from all of his ex-wives saying he was the perfect husband and any problems we had were their fault.

Look, HBO deserves credit for a great promotional innovation that worked wonders for a brief while. But when you're spending five minutes getting to know the one-eyed janitor at the Wild Card Gym, it's probably a sign that the show isn't as compelling as it used to be.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Heavyweight Charles Davis, marking the second issue in a row in which a fighter who didn't officially score a victory scored a Stingray. Last month, Robert DaLuz got jobbed out of a decision in a six-rounder. This month, Davis settled for a majority draw against Bermane Stiverne, but when you look at their records, you'll see why this is the most Stingray-worthy draw since Biblical times, when Rachel and her ugly sister Leah both got to marry Jacob. (Talk about kissing your sister. Or your wife's sister. Or your wife's sister who also happens to be your wife.)

Stiverne's record coming in was 17-1 (16), including no fewer than 13 first-round knockouts. Davis had the same number of wins—17—but they were accompanied by 17 losses and a draw. And he came in riding a streak of nine consecutive defeats. Plus, he was giving up 36 pounds. In fact, Davis turned pro as a super middleweight. This was supposed to be a cakewalk for Stiverne (no truth to the rumor that his wife's name is Laverne). But the judges ruled it a draw at the end of six rounds.

Officially, there were no winners in the fight. But this was a major step backward for Stiverne, and anything other than a loss is a huge step forward for Davis. He came into the fight with a .500 record and he exited with a .500 record, and that's good enough to earn him a Stingray. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

True Greatness

At 19 years of age, I have heard older boxing enthusiasts reminisce about the days of legends such as Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Ray Leonard. There was a void inside me as I felt my generation was lacking a boxer of this caliber. That changed on May 2 when I witnessed Manny Pacquiao put on a Hall of Fame performance by dismantling Ricky Hatton, cementing his legacy of one of the greatest fighters of all-time.

Not since the weight-jumping days of Henry Armstrong has a fighter displayed such a willingness to fight anyone, anyplace, or anytime, no matter how big they are. The way Pacquiao rose through the ranks, starting with his days as an unknown 17-year-old weighing a mere 106 pounds to become a worldwide superstar and the best pound-for-pound boxer on the planet is a story that will be told to young boxing fans for years to come.

Thank you, Manny Pacquaio, for representing the sport I love so well.

RICHARD WIPF
Ottawa, Ontario

As a big Ricky Hatton fan, I viewed with anticipation the buildup to the Manny Pacquiao-Hatton fight, and I thought Hatton appeared supremely confident and in excellent physical shape. To think that a former flyweight titleholder could defeat him in such a brutal and convincing manner put in perspective what an incredible athlete and fighter Pac-Man is. THE RING's pound-for-pound title is in very worthy hands.

MICK GILLIMORE
Stoke-on-Kent, UK

Manny Pacquiao's second-round knockout of Ricky Hatton prompted plenty of letters and e-mails, including those of Richard Wipf and Mick Gillimore. Both readers praised Pac-Man's sensational victory and agree he is worthy of his top spot on THE RING's pound-for-pound rankings.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Confused in London

Why isn't Vitali Klitschko recognized as THE RING's champion? He was your last heavyweight champion and has since come back and beat a top contender in Samuel Peter. He hasn't lost a fight since your magazine named him champion, so what is the problem?

I remember when Muhammad Ali retired and came back to fight Larry Holmes in 1980. Holmes won and your magazine recognized him as champion. Please explain, as I am really confused about this situation.

PETER THOMPSON
London, UK

Editor's note: THE RING declared the heavyweight title vacant when reigning champion Vitali Klitschko retired due to chronic injuries on November 9, 2005. In order to fill the vacancy, there has to be a bout between the number-one and number-two contenders, which has yet to happen. THE RING's Championship Policy, which was announced in the April 2002 issue, was not in effect when Ali fought Holmes in 1980.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Carl Froch drives a right hand into the jaw of Jermain Taylor during their exciting super middleweight bout, which Froch won via 12th-round TKO. Like most fans, reader Pete Santiago enjoyed the fight, but he was far from happy about Jim Gray's postfight interview.

Follow The Money

The WBC stripped Timothy Bradley Jr. of his super lightweight title because he would not fight its number-one ranked Devon Alexander by a certain deadline. Who is Devon Alexander and why would any fighter pay sanctioning fees to a sanctioning body that ranks him as the number-one 140-pounder? What would it take to boycott the entire alphabet soup gang? Boxers have to share their purses with enough people. Why lose more to a sanctioning body when THE RING does it for free?

RICHARD ESCOTO
rescoto@ucscalumni.com

Editor's note: Virtually everything the various alphabet organizations do is done to make money, as they derive most of their revenue from sanctioning fees. Unfortunately, many people within the boxing industry—promoters, managers, and even fighters—like working with shady organizations because they can be manipulated, while THE RING cannot.

Froch Yes, Gray No

I had an opportunity to watch the Carl Froch-Jermain Taylor fight and really enjoyed the way Carl Froch ended the fight. Froch showed excellent poise in every round, even after being dropped in the third. I watched his eyes every time he sat in his corner between rounds, and he was totally focused. Kudos to Jermain Taylor for the professional way he handled his loss. And by the way, why does Showtime allow Jim Gray to do postfight interviews? I have seen him be disrespectful to all types of athletes with his idiotic questions. He's just plain awful.

PETER SANTIAGO
Manassas, VA

Reading Ryan

I enjoyed reading "Ryan Out Loud" in the June 2009 issue. I agree with Jeff Ryan on muzzling Larry Merchant wannabe Max Kellerman. This is the guy from ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* who used to rant and rave about Zab "Super" Judah! Ryan's comments about Muhammad Ali are also dead on. I never cared for Ali's racist and unnecessary comments. Was Ali really the greatest or, like Floyd Mayweather, just great at convincing us that he was. Finally, I agree with what Ryan wrote about Michael Buffer. I prefer Jimmy Lennon. He is not full of himself like Buffer.

FERNANDO PONCE
Midland, TX

Mind-Altering Interview

Kudos to Joseph Santoliquito for his interview with Andre Berto in the May 2009 issue of THE RING. Before reading the interview, I always rooted against Berto. But the interview changed my point of view. What an affable, self-deprecating, determined, hard worker Berto is—a real breath of fresh air in a sport that surely needs one.

RALPH SOLOMONS
Savannah, GA ■

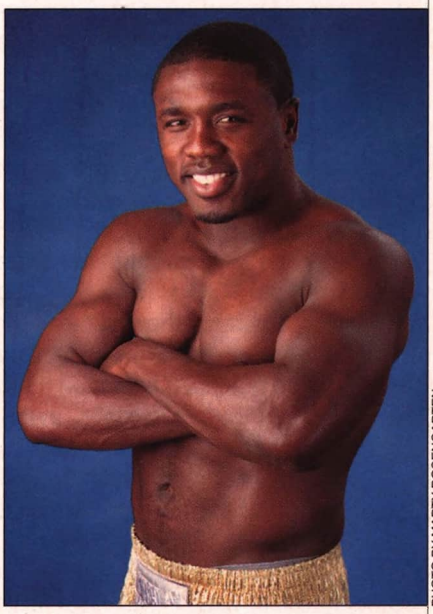


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

RING reader Ralph Solomons changed his mind about Andre Berto after reading the interview with Berto in the May 2009 issue. Instead of rooting against him, Solomons is now a Berto fan.

By Don Stradley

"The Baby Bull" Battles Back

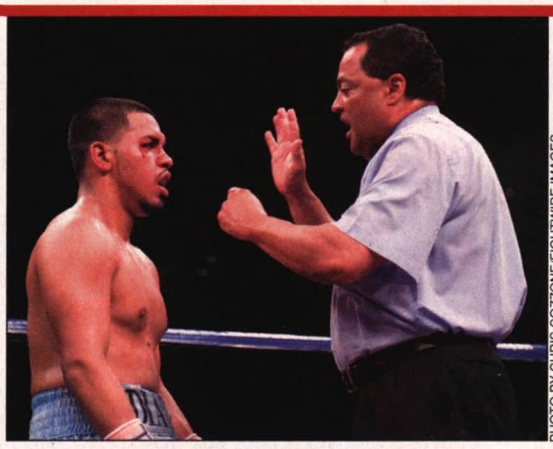


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Diaz: Rebuilding following loss to Marquez

Juan Diaz is only 25, but already he's had to prove himself a number of times. As a 16-year-old rookie, he had to prove he really belonged in a professional ring. Then he had to prove he was ready for tough WBC titlist Lakva Sim. His next mission was to prove he could compete with a star like Acelino Freitas. He also had to prove he could attend college while defending his lightweight titles. Then he had to prove he could come back after losing to Nate Campbell. Now he has to prove he wasn't ruined by the knockout loss he suffered at the hands of Juan Manuel Marquez last February.

His longtime mentor and trainer, Willie Savannah, told THE RING that "The Baby Bull" will not only return in August, but that he hasn't missed a beat.

"He knows exactly where he screwed up," Savannah said. "He wants to get back in the ring and start using his boxing skill rather than try to overpower people."

The Marquez loss, as devastating as it looked, didn't sour Diaz on the sport. According to Savannah, "He's been fine. The Monday after he lost he attended a four-hour Bible study class. He just went on living the same life he's been living for the past seven years, going to classes and finishing up school. He's been in the gym, swimming and lifting weights, sparring a bit. He's finally graduated from college, and he's looking forward to putting all of his focus on boxing. Of course, he's applying to law schools now, but he's still very determined to succeed in boxing."

There was no opponent for Diaz as of press time, but HBO was holding August 22 open for a Houston show where hometown boy Diaz always draws a crowd. Diaz, 34-2 (17), remains a popular fighter on the network and at Golden Boy Promotions, even though he's lost two of his last three fights.

"[HBO Senior Vice President] Kerry Davis talked to me about Juan's next opponent," said Savannah. "At first they mentioned Paulie Malignaggi, but Paulie might fight someone else. David Diaz was mentioned; we'd gladly take him."

David Diaz, 34-2-1 (18), hasn't fought since being kayoed by Manny Pacquiao last year. The dueling Diaz' records are almost identical, and both are rugged, action fighters. Diaz-Diaz could be very entertaining.

GBP matchmaker Eric Gomez told THE RING that no opponent was set, but suggested Juan was entitled to fight someone "not quite as good as Juan Manuel Marquez."

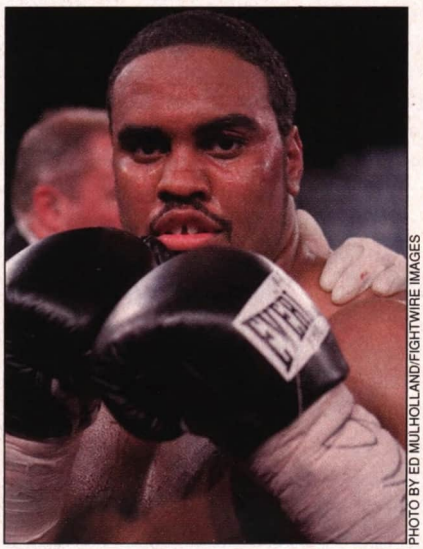


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Chambers: Faces tough test in Germany

Listen Up

Mahyar "Little Tyson" Monshipour, 31-3-2 (21), meets WBA bantamweight titlist **Anselmo Moreno**, 25-1-1 (8), in Poitiers, France, on July 4. Southpaw Moreno will be defending the WBA strap for the fourth time. Although he has done most of his fighting in Panama, Moreno is a bit of a road warrior, having won the belt in Germany in an upset of **Wladimir Sidorenko** in May 2008 and returning to Germany this May to beat Sidorenko in a rematch. He's not known for his punching, but he's scored a few early-round knockouts, including an impressive first-round stoppage of **Ricardo Vargas** in 2007 ... Monshipour has won three in a row since losing THE RING's 2006 Fight of the Year to **Somsak Sithchatchawal**, but after spending most of his career at super bantamweight, he will be dropping down to 118 for the first time since 1999. With **Vic Darchinyan** challenging for a different bantamweight belt in July, there's the titillating possibility of a Monshipour-Darchinyan bout in the near future. If that fight happens, Little Tyson may find himself in another Fight of the Year ... Also on July 4, Philadelphia heavyweight **Eddie Chambers**, 34-1 (18), faces undefeated **Alexander Dimitrenko**, 29-0 (19), at the Color Line Arena, in Altona, Hamburg, Germany ... World cruiserweight champion **Tomasz Adamek**, 37-1 (25), will defend THE RING belt against **Bobby Gunn**, 21-3-1 (18), at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, on July 10 ... On July 11 in Nuerburg, Germany, WBA middleweight boss **Felix Sturm**, 32-2-1 (14), takes on **Khoren Gevor**, 30-3 (16), at the Nuerburgring race track. ■

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